US court ruling to be used to trace Ping's accounts

Story on PAGE A2

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

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Gov't now willing to talk with Piatco

By Michael Lim Ubac

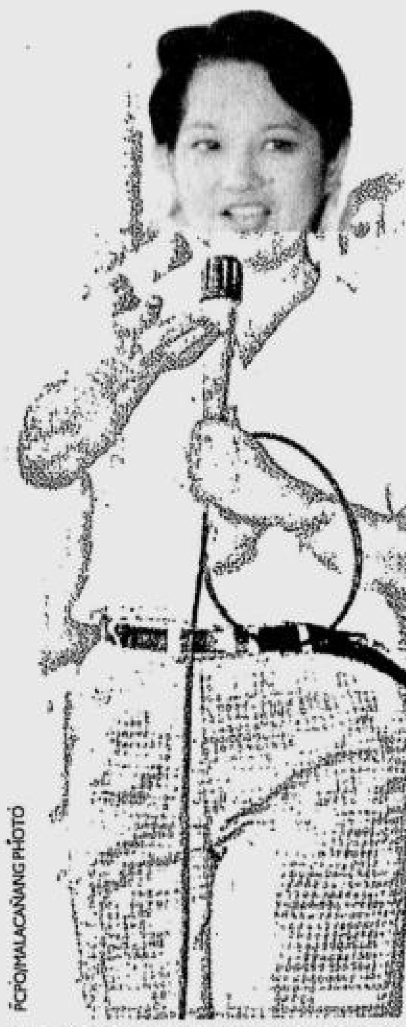
BETTER late than never?

The Macapagal administration has finally taken steps to discuss a possible renegotiation of the controversial Naia Terminal 3 contracts awarded to Philippine International Air Terminals Corp. (Piatco).

Following the order of the Supreme Court last month for both parties to at-

GOV'T/A20

Corruption raps filed vs GMA aide


FCPO/MALACAÑANG PHOTO

THE PRESIDENT in Camp Gonzalo Sionco in Datu Udin Sinsuat, Maguindanao.

JDV to endorse impeachment complaint if...

By Dona Pazzibugan and Christine O. Avendaño

SPEAKER Jose de Venecia Jr. said yesterday he would do his ministerial duty and endorse the impeachment complaint against President Macapagal-Arroyo to the House committee on rules if a congressman signed it.

But De Venecia said in a statement that the complaint consisted of old allegations, most of which had already been

JDV/A20

Bobi, Nani fighting over Marcos room

By Fe Zamora
INQ7.net

THE MALACAÑANG chief of staff Rigoberto Tiglao and just-sworn in Press Secretary Hernani Braganza have brought their feuding and fussing into the bedroom, that is, the bedroom of the fallen dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

Gutsy anti-Marcos activists—Tiglao in the '70s and Braganza in the '80s—both are now in a bitter struggle to occupy the private lair of Marcos.

Tiglao got there first. But last week,

BOBI/A18

REMEMBERING MENDIOLA
On the eve of the 16th commemoration of the Mendiola massacre of 13 farmers, a 12-year-old Mangyan holds up empty ammo shells during a rally headed by the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas in front of Camp Aguinaldo to call for justice to the victims. DENNIS SABANGAN

GMA to show biz folk on VAT: Get real

By Dona Pazzibugan and Michael Lim Ubac

THIS time, show biz folk are not getting any help from President Macapagal-Arroyo, a known movie buff.

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said yesterday that the President would not ask Congress to defer once more the imposition of a 10-percent value-added tax (VAT) on professionals such as entertainers, doctors, dentists, lawyers, accountants and athletes.

The law mandating the imposition of the VAT on professionals has already been deferred several times since it took effect in 1994, according to Bunye. More importantly, he said, the government would need the money raised from the 10-percent VAT on professionals, estimated at P8.6 billion a year.

"You know (the government) needs this money, and the President has made a pronouncement that she wants to improve our (tax) collection. She will be going against her own pronouncement if we keep on de-

GMA/A19

6 others also named by Palace graftbuster

By Carlito Pablo

A DAY after the President declared war on corruption, her anti-graft commissioner brought the war closer to home.

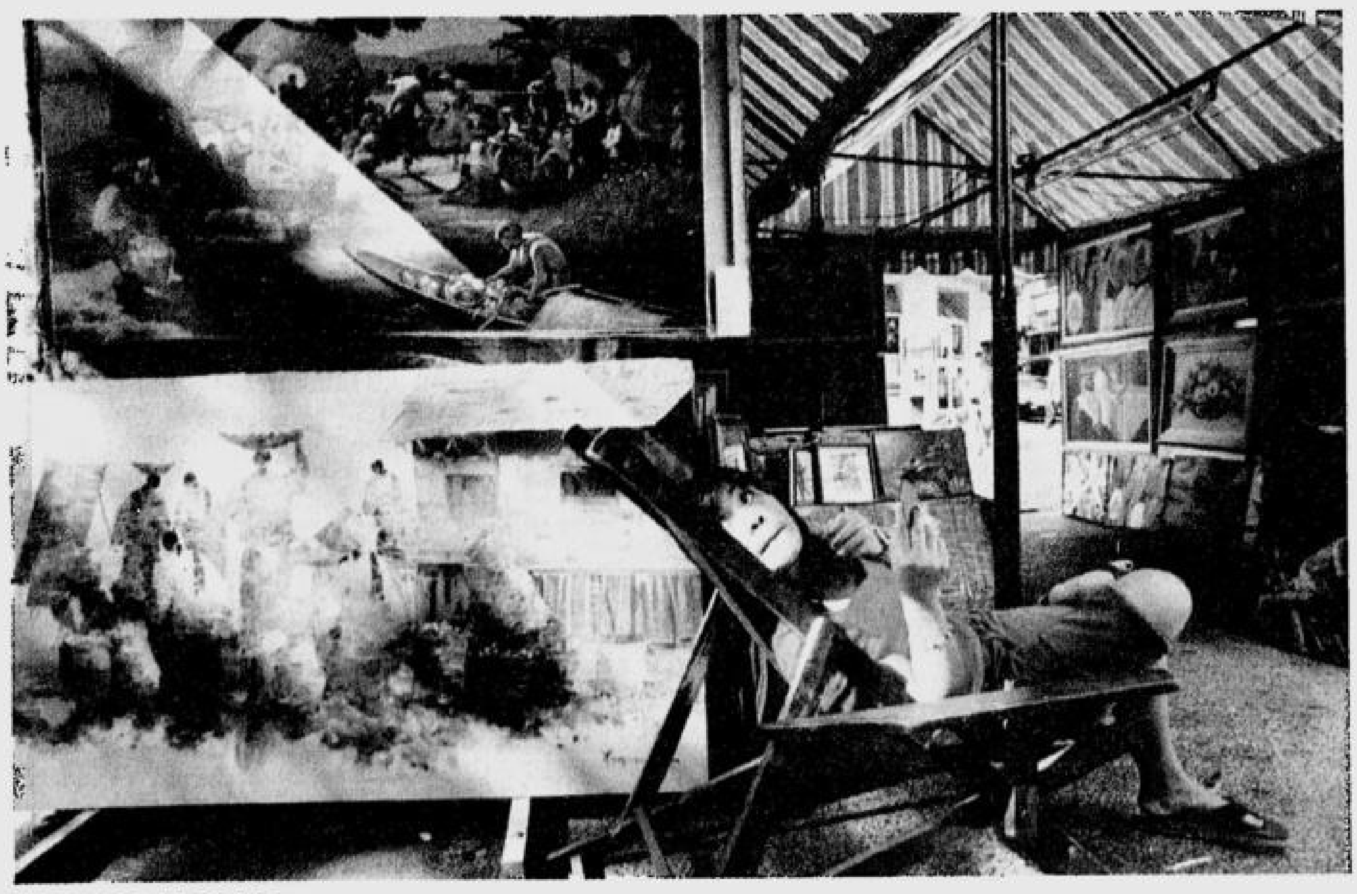
The chair of the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission, Dario Rama, yesterday filed graft and corruption charges against a close associate of the President herself.

The PAGC, an agency under the Office of the President, named Edgardo Manda and six others as respondents in an administrative case arising from their participation in the allegedly anomalous contract to build Terminal 3 of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

Manda is currently general manager of the Manila International Airport Authority and served as a deputy chief of staff of Ms Macapagal when she was still the Vice President.

Manda is also the former president of Lualhati Foundation, the charitable organization identified with Ms Macapagal which received an P8-million donation in 1999, when she was still the Vice President, from Mark Jimenez, a friend of President Joseph Estra-

CORRUPTION/A20



WAITING, HOPING
Will the 4th World Meeting of Families give Philippine tourism its badly needed boost? A salesgirl, one of hundreds at Manila's tourist district in Ermita, hopes so as she waits to sell art work reproductions of Filipino masters. AFP

Still full speed ahead on Cha-cha for Lakas

By Carlito Pablo and Cynthia D. Balana

THE LEADING lights of the ruling Lakas-CMD are digging in for a "silent" struggle.

Despite Manila Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin's contrary position to Charter change, party bosses led by Speaker Jose de Venecia agreed at a meeting Monday night in Malacañang to continue to push for a constituent assembly to rewrite the 1987 Constitution and effect a shift to the parliamentary and federal form of government.

"The sense among party leaders is that we need to work silently with allies because we believe that they'll soon see the

STILL/A20

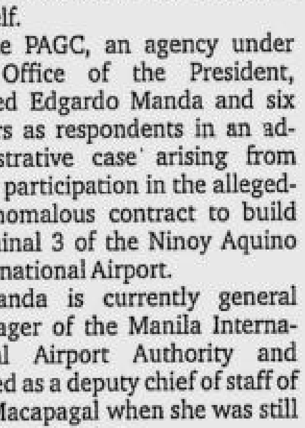
Another chopper goes down; 7 hurt

By Tonette Orejas and Anselmo Roque
PDI Central Luzon Desk

SAN JOSE CITY—An Army chopper en route to a site where the supposed remains of an Aglipayan pastor had earlier been dug up crashed yesterday into a mountain here, injuring its seven passengers including two TV reporters and two cameramen.

Maj. Gen. Rodolfo Garcia, chief of the

ANOTHER/A18


NAYKOOO...
PA'NO PA AKO MALILIGO?

Colder days, nights coming

BRING out thicker blankets.

Weather forecasters yesterday said the mornings would get even colder in the coming weeks as the northeasterly winds from Siberia continue to sweep the country, causing temperatures to

COLDER/A18

WORLD MEETING OF FAMILIES

9 cardinals, 193 bishops, 320 priests, 6,000 delegates

By Armand Nocum

THE POPE may not be around, but the guest list for the 4th World Meeting of Families which starts today has tried to make up for his absence through sheer number. A total of nine cardinals, 193 archbishops and bishops and 320 priests from around the world have signed up for the event.

The five-day meet—which is being held for the first time in Asia—begins this morning with President Macapagal-Arroyo delivering the conference's message, along with Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines Most Rev. Antonio Franco.

Some 6,000 delegates in 80 countries are expected to attend the event, with the largest delegations coming from Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, Vietnam, the United States and Mexico.

The event will see the participation of 67 international theologians, lay leaders of family movements and Vatican officials who will speak on such matters as the family in a secularized world; the family, politics and society; the family and the struggle for justice; and the family

9 CARDINALS/A18

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WEATHER FORECAST

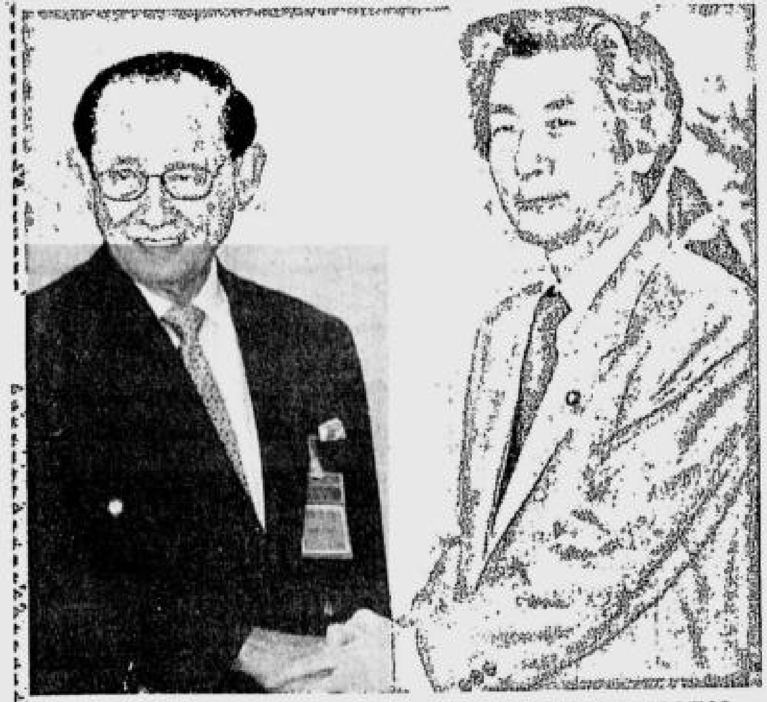
FORECAST: The Eastern section of the country particularly Eastern Visayas and Northeastern Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH /01/22/03

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Court ruling to be used to trace Ping's accounts



FVR IN TOKYO Former President Fidel V. Ramos is welcomed by Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi during Ramos' courtesy call at the Prime Minister's official residence in Tokyo Tuesday. AP

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

THE LAWYER who won for his client a $3 million default judgment against Sen. Panfilo Lacson in a California court is now going after the controversial senator's bank records and assets in the United States.

Rodel Rodis, the lawyer of businesswoman Blanquita Pelaez who sued Lacson over a failed $15 million handcuffs deal, said he would subpoena the records of Lacson's bank accounts in the US to enforce the Jan. 10 judgment of Judge Julie Conger of the California Superior Court.

Conger ordered Lacson to pay Pelaez $3,031,262, representing the balance, plus damages and interest, of the handcuffs contract that Lacson, the then Philippine National Police chief, had allegedly refused to pay.

The money judgment was handed down after Lacson failed to answer Pelaez's charges which had been filed on Dec. 14, 2001.

Lacson was also ordered to present before the court on March 5 documents pertaining to his US bank accounts that would be used in enforcing the judgment.

Rodis said that with the judgment, he could now go to the US banks and subpoena the records of Lacson's accounts "so that I can get what assets he has and attach those assets to execute the judgment."

Rodis, a Filipino American who has been practicing law in the US for the past 23 years, said the Conger judgment gave him the legal authority to subpoena Lacson's records with Citibank, Bank of America and other banks with offshore branches where Lacson is believed to maintain accounts.

"First we will subpoena the bank records to determine where he has his assets and under whose names. Then I will ask the court to attach those assets or properties," he said.

Rodis said they knew of "reports of apartments and buildings" in the US that are owned by Lacson.

Lacson's lawyer, Philip Sigfrid Fortun has informed the California court of his client's refusal to honor its summonses. He claimed the court had no jurisdiction over the case and that the service of summons was invalid because it was not served in accordance with Philippine laws.

Pelaez sued Lacson for "intentional interference with economic relationship, slander and intentional infliction of emotional distress" in connection with a P15.6-million contract she won for the US-based Smith & Wesson to supply 41,297 pairs of handcuffs to the PNP in 1996.

Her firm B.H.Pelaez Enterprises was the exclusive agent of Smith & Wesson in the Philippines. She is a US citizen and lives in Florida's Alameda county.

In her declaration in support of the default judgment of the California court, Pelaez cited an INQUIRER May 22, 2002 report quoting the US Federal Bureau of Investigation as saying that Lacson had "managed to stash approximately $500 million in US banks."

Rodis has asked that Lacson be required to present 16 documents, including his bank accounts for the past five years, a list of all real property either owned by him or his wife Alice de Perio-Lacson or anyone acting on his behalf, the registration records of every vehicle he owned in the US in the past five years, records of his businesses, insurance policies or transfer of properties.

Pass anti-laundering amendments or face sanctions, RP warned

THE PHILIPPINES must pass crucial amendments to its money-laundering laws or face sanctions that could cost it some $19.8 million daily, officials warned yesterday.

Failure to pass the amendments by the Feb. 12 deadline could lead to sanctions being imposed by wealthy countries that are members of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), an anti-money laundering coalition.

The Senate and the House of Representatives are confident they can pass the amendments by the end of January but some "sincere interests" in government have been opposing these measures, said Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr., head of the Senate banking committee.

President Macapagal-Arroyo urged legislators from the ruling party late Monday to pass the amendments to the laws after warning them last week they could face an electoral backlash if they fail to do so.

Although the Philippines passed the anti-money laundering law in 2001, the FATF found many loopholes that virtually made it toothless, Central Bank of the Philippines governor Rafael Buenaventura told reporters.

Among the weaknesses of the laws was the Philippines' tight bank secrecy laws that made it impossible for the government anti-money laundering commission to open bank accounts without a court order, which was usually blocked by legal manuevers.

Buenaventura remarked that of the 333 cases of alleged money-laundering investigated by the commission, covering some P980 million in deposits, they had only been able to get a court order for one case.

After consulting with the FATF, Congress, prodded by Ms Macapagal, was now rushing three key amendments.

These include allowing investigators to examine bank accounts without a court order, giving the probers authority to look into accounts opened before the anti-money laundering law was passed and lowering the threshold of accounts covered by the law from P4 million to only P500,000.

If the amendments are not passed, wealthy countries may impose tight restrictions on the movement of funds to the Philippines, delaying the transfer of funds for weeks and possibly hiking transaction costs to unprofitable levels, the officials warned. AFP

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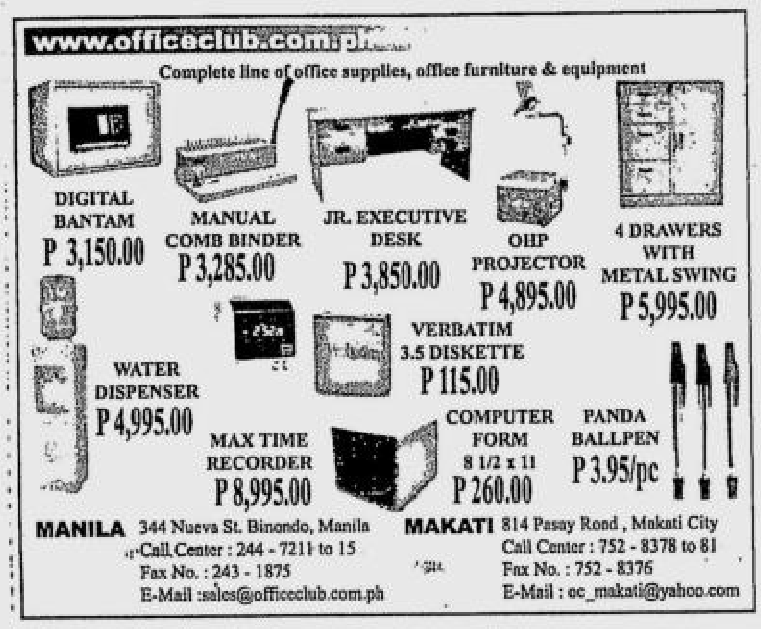

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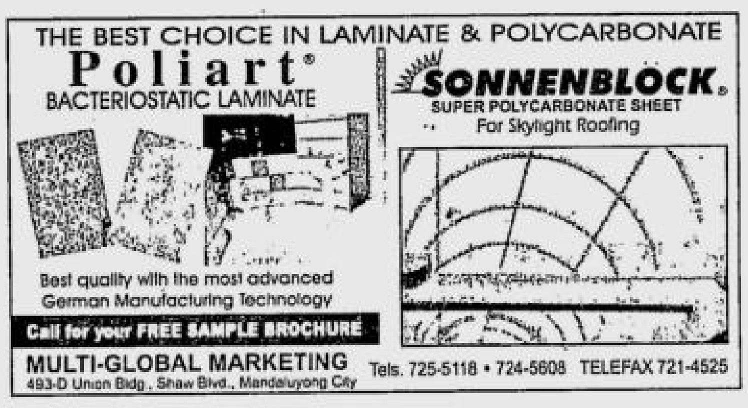

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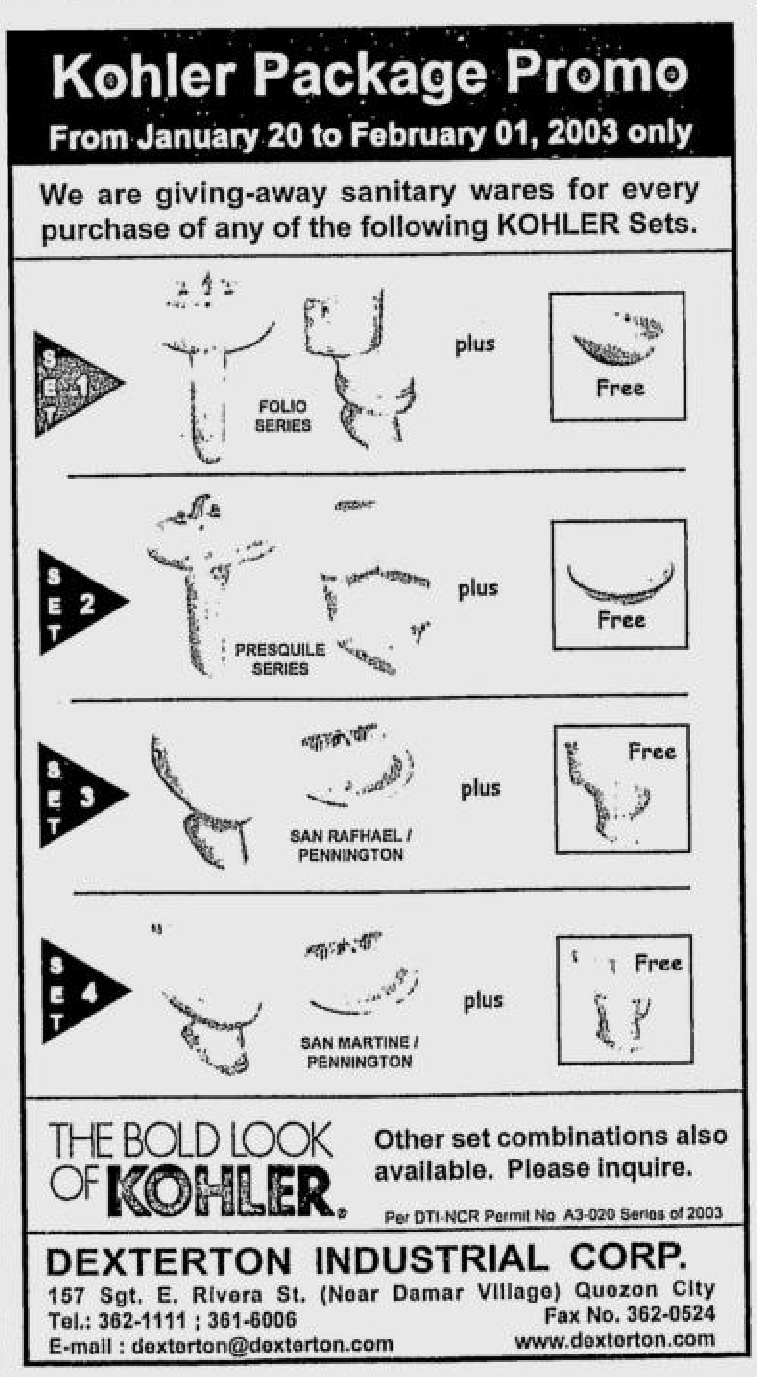

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World Bank OKs $33-M loan for ARMM

THE WORLD Bank said yesterday it had approved a $33.6 million loan to alleviate poverty in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

The money will go to a "social fund project" which aims to reduce poverty and implement activities "that will promote a peaceful and safe environment in the conflict-affected areas," within five years, the bank said.

Covering five provinces in Mindanao, the ARMM "has the highest poverty incidence and the lowest level of quality of life in the Philippines," the WB said.

Government data show that largely due to mismanagement, 70 percent of the ARMM's 2.2 million population live in poverty.

"This new project represents a substantial commitment by the World Bank to support peace and development in Mindanao and will strengthen the ARMM government's capacity to reduce poverty," World Bank country director Robert Vance Pulley said. *AFP*

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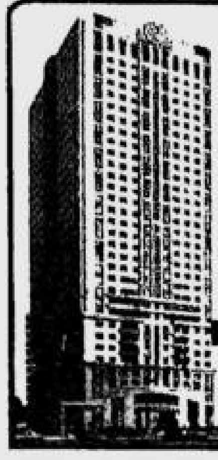

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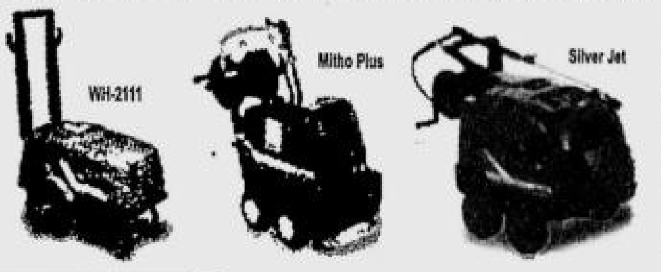

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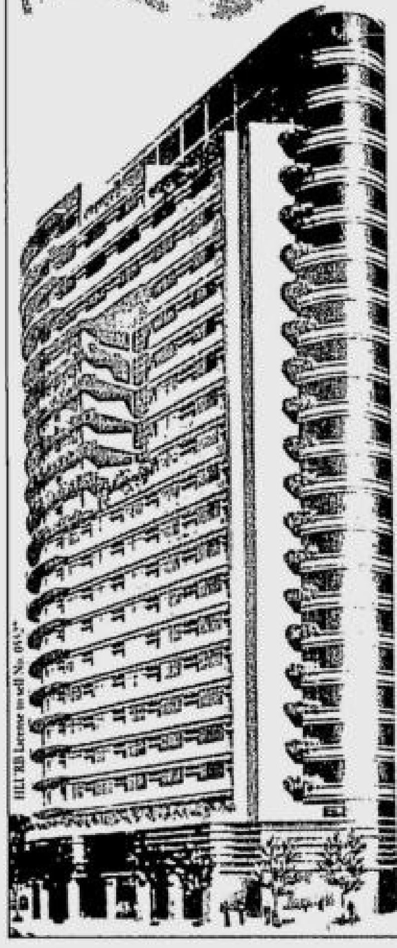

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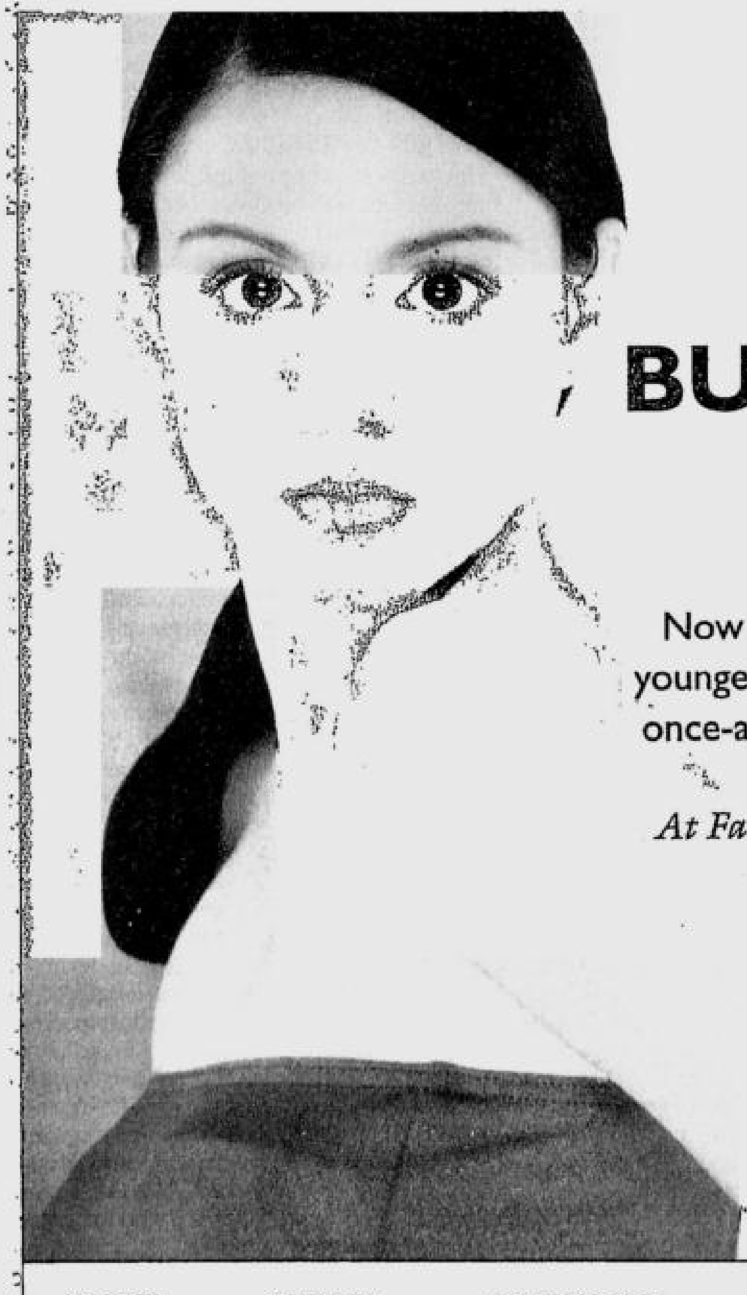

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'STATEMENT OF UNITY'

LDP solons back Angara as party chief

By Christine O. Avendaño

HOUSE members of the opposition Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino (LDP or Laban) denied reports of a move to oust Sen. Edgardo Angara as president of the party and de facto leader of the opposition and pledged their support for Angara's leadership.

Ten out of 17 LDP House members signed a "statement of unity" after a luncheon meeting yesterday attended by Angara and Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, another LDP stalwart.

The meeting also took up the important issue of strengthening the party and choosing the standard bearer for the 2004 presidential elections, said Minority Leader Carlos Padilla. He added that the search would start within the party.

Angara, who recently had a rapprochement with President Macapagal-Arroyo and followed it up with an announcement that he would not run for President in 2004, has been under fire from some of his party members.

"The undersigned leaders of the LDP are fully and unconditionally supportive of its present leadership under its party leader . . . Angara," read the statement of unity, reportedly prepared by Rep. Butz Aquino.

"Laban likewise denies and rejects false and malicious claims that there is a move to change the party leadership," it said.

At a news conference after the meeting, Cavite Rep. Gilbert Remulla and Muntinlupa Rep. Rozzano Rufino Biazon said reports of an oust-Angara move were the handiwork of "outside forces" out to divide the party.

Padilla and Zamboanga Rep. Celso Lobregat said that whatever confusion arose from Angara's announcement early this month that he would not contest the presidency in 2004 had been clarified and resolved at yesterday's meeting.

Quoting LDP sources, a newspaper report (not in the INQUIRER) the other day said the oust-Angara move was being spearheaded by "disgruntled members of the party."

Iloilo Rep. Rolex Suplico and the younger Biazon were identified as among those allegedly leading the ouster campaign.

The report said the move stemmed from Angara's decision to support Ms Macapagal's unity government and his failure to wrest control of the Senate from Senate President Franklin Drilon.

Angara himself belied the rumor, saying the report was "fabricated" and "fraudulent."

"I have spoken with the people who, they said, said it and they denied it. In fact, after this I'm going to attend our Laban caucus," he told reporters.

Opposition senators distanced themselves from the oust-Angara move.

"I'm not aware of any move, at least in the Senate, to oust Sen. Angara," said Sen. Panfilo Lacson in an ambush interview. *With a report from Michael Lim Ubac*

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Solons don't have goods on PLDT boss

By Christine O. Avendaño

THE LAWMAKERS who filed a graft case Monday against former Bureau of Internal Revenue chief Rene Bañez had wanted to include businessman Manuel Pangilinan and other officials of Metro Pacific Corp. (MPC), including then MPC board member Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo, in the charges.

But the congressmen could not find any evidence to directly link Pangilinan and the others to the charge that Bañez had made the government pay the documentary tax liability of the Fort Bonifacio Development Corp. (FBDC), an MPC subsidiary, amounting to P1.18 billion when he became BIR chief.

"That's why it took us a long time to file this case," said Southern Leyte Rep. Aniceto Saludo, leader of the 10 congressmen who filed the case against Bañez before the Ombudsman.

Bañez said the charges were a "hatchet job" against him.

Bañez, who was tax director of both the MPC and FBDC before being appointed to head the BIR, was charged with violating Republic Act 3019 or the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act after his actions as BIR chief resulted in unwarranted benefits for the Metro Pacific-Fort Bonifacio conglomerate of Pangilinan, Saludo said.

The congressmen accused Bañez of causing undue injury to the government after he caused the government to pay the P1.18 billion documentary stamp liability of FBDC that was incurred during the sale of a portion of Fort Bonifacio in 1995.

The lawmakers included former Budget Secretary Benjamin Diokno in the charges after he allegedly issued the special allotment release order (SARO) to cover payment of FBDC's documentary tax liability.

They also scored Bañez for not appealing a Court of Tax Appeals (CTA) ruling in November 1999 ordering the BIR to refund P15 million to the FBDC.

At a news conference before the lawmakers filed the graft case, their lawyer Mario Ongkiko said the CTA decision was "material" to the case because the FBDC had pending refund claims totaling P5 billion before that court.

Ongkiko said the CTA decision would set a precedent that would allow the remaining refund claims of the FBDC to be granted.

Saludo admitted that their case against Bañez was similar to the one filed earlier against him by customs collectors but which was dismissed by the Ombudsman after the complainants failed to show up for the hearings.

Aside from Saludo, the other lawmakers who filed the suit against Bañez were Deputy Speakers Raul Gonzalez, Emilio Espinosa and Gerry Salapuddin, and Reps. Rolex Suplico, Rodolfo Albano, Augusto Baculio, Vicente Sandoval, Benasing Macarambon and Oscar Gozos.

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16TH ANNIVERSARY

Farmers remember Mendiola massacre

By Gerald G. Lacuarta

THOUSANDS of farmers from Southern Tagalog and Central Luzon are set to converge at the historic Don Chino Roces Bridge in Manila today to recall the horrors of the infamous "Mendiola Massacre."

Sixteen years is apparently not enough to obliterate the nightmare: On Jan. 22, 1987, 13 farmers were killed at the site—still called Mendiola Bridge at the time—in a strafing by anti-riot forces.

The militant Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP), to which the victims had belonged, said it would mobilize members from Southern Tagalog, Central Luzon, Cordillera, and the Bicol regions to stage a "peasants' version" of the Catholic Church's "Fourth World Meeting of Families," which also starts today.

Today's commemoration would be led by the families of dead as well as the survivors, who were still seeking justice, according to current KMP chair Rafael Mariano.

Anti-riot personnel from the Western Police District, the Integrated National Police, and the Philippine Marines had opened fire on a protest rally of 10,000 peasants demanding "genuine land reform" under the newly installed Aquino administration.

After the shooting, Danilo Arjona, Leopoldo Alonzo, Adelfa Aribe, Dionisio Bautista, Roberto Caylao, Vicente Campomanes, Ronilo Dumanico, Dante Evangelio, Angelito Gutierrez, Rodrigo Grampan, Bernabe Laquindanum, Sonny Boy Perez, and Roberto Yumul lay dead. More than 80 others were wounded.

The massacre scuttled ongoing peace talks between the government and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines. A year later, the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (Carp) was passed by Congress and signed into law by then President Corazon Aquino.

KMP account

According to the KMP's narration of events, peasants and fisherfolk started a camp-out on Jan. 15, 1987 in front of the Ministry of Agrarian Reform building in Quezon City. They were clamoring for the complete realization of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program that Pres. Aquino had promised to implement.

Five days later, KMP leaders headed by Jaime "Ka Jimmy" Tadeo held a dialogue with then Agrarian Reform Minister Heherson Alvarez, but the talks bogged down. On Jan. 22, the farmers decided to march to Malacañang, to present their demands directly to Aquino.

The march started from the MAR camp-out at 10:30 a.m., with more rallyists from the student, women, labor and urban poor sector joining along the way. They stopped to hold a brief program at the Liwasang Bonifacio fronting the Manila Central Post Office at 1 p.m. Finally at 4:30 p.m., the protesters, now numbering close to 15,000 proceeded to the Palace.

At the foot of Mendiola bridge, the anti-riot squads blocked the path with four six-by-six trucks and eight fire trucks. Pandemonium broke loose when the marchers pressed on.

Still according to the KMP account, an explosion was followed by the hurling of pillboxes, stones and bottles. When the police line was breached, gunshots rang out. The demonstrators disengaged, but sporadic firing continued.

Danilo "Ka Daning" Ramos, current KMP secretary-general, recalled how his comrades fell as they were shot "like chickens in the wild." He was 31 years old, and the spokesperson for the Alyansa ng Magbubukid ng Bulacan.

"They were heavily armed," Ramos said. "They were out to kill us. When we tried to flee, soldiers aboard owner-type jeeps continued to fire at us. We all shouted for them to stop, but our cries fell on deaf ears."

Charges dismissed

Immediately after the incident, Aquino issued Administrative Order No. 11 creating the Citizens' Mendiola Commission headed by retired SC Justice Pedro Abad Santos, with retired Justices Jose Peria and Antonio Miranda as members.

On Feb. 27, 1987, the commission recommended the criminal prosecution of four unidentified, uniformed individuals shown either on film footage or in photographs firing in the direction of the marchers. It also recommended the prosecution of all the commissioned officers of both the Western Police District and the INP Field Force, who were armed during the incident.

The House Committee on Human Rights, on Feb. 10, 1988, recommended the "expeditious payment of compensation" to the victims.

On their own, the victims' families and the survivors filed charges against the government and several police and military officers for damages amounting to P6.5 million. Among the defendants were former Pres. Fidel Ramos, who was then National Defense Secretary; former AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Renato de Villa; former WPD Superintendent B/Gen. Alfredo Lim; Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, then chief of the Philippine Marines; B/Gen. Brigido Paredes, former Marines commandant; Col. Edgar dela Torre and Col. Romeo Monfort of the defunct Capcom; and former PNP Chief Cesar Nazareno, then WPD deputy superintendent.

On May 31, 1988, Judge Edilberto Sandoval of Branch 9 of the Manila Regional Trial Court dismissed the P6.5-million class suit filed by relatives of the 13 farmers against the Aquino administration. On August 8, 1988, the Supreme Court upheld the RTC decision, citing the government's immunity from suit.

The case was "dismissed with finality." To date, no one has been indicted, and the victims have not been compensated.

"It seems the death of our 13 farmers is meaningless. There's no genuine agrarian reform in sight," Tadeo lamented yesterday. *With Christine A. Gaylican and Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Another Erap son summoned to plunder trial

By Volt Contreras

ANOTHER son of deposed President Joseph Estrada is now being dragged into his plunder trial.

State prosecutors yesterday asked the Sandiganbayan to subpoena documents from the now defunct Urban Bank for transactions bearing the name of San Juan Mayor Joseph Victor "JV" Ejercito, Estrada's son with former actress Guia Gomez.

Another Estrada son, Jinggoy, is among those accused in the plunder trial.

The subpoena was being sought to retrace bank accounts that allegedly served as conduits for funds entering the Jose Velarde account, where Estrada allegedly kept ill-gotten wealth.

Senior State Prosecutor Alex Padilla said the summoned documents include checks drawn from one or two Urban Bank accounts allegedly involving Ejercito.

Four checks amounting to P109 million, were from Urban Bank Trust Account No. 858, the subject of a January 1999 trust agreement that named Ejercito as the "trustee."

Another set of four checks with value totalling P75 million were from another account.

Catch me if you can, Ka Roger dares gov't

LUCENA CITY—"Catch me if you can" is not only the title of a new Hollywood movie but the challenge Communist Party of the Philippines spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal hurled yesterday at the government.

"Let them find me," Rosal replied in Filipino in a cellular phone interview with the INQUIRER, amid reports government forces were hunting for him.

Rosal accused the military in Southern Luzon of conducting a "wild killing spree of innocent civilians [using] the terrorist troops of President Macapagal-Arroyo and General Kyamko in the Southern Luzon area, particularly Bicol."

He cited five recent cases of military atrocities in Sorsogon and Occidental Mindoro.

"I'll send you their [victims'] identities in due time. It would only prove that despite the much publicized GMA government of unity and cooperation, the reverse is happening in the countryside," he said.

The military last week said it was deploying more troops to the Bicol and Southern Tagalog regions after a resurgence of communist guerrilla activity there.

Last month, Rosal met with selected newsmen somewhere in Bicol in his first clandestine press conference in a long time.

Maj. Jose Broso, Armed Forces spokesperson based at Camp Nakar here, said Rosal's allegations about military atrocities were "pure lies and deceit."

Broso said that what was happening is NPA members in the two regions were surrendering to government forces in droves.

He cited the surrender of an NPA courier identified as Elpidio Evangelista and a woman rebel, Annabelle Bueno, alias Ka Gerlie, to Col. Juanito Gomez in Victoria, Oriental Mindoro on Sunday. Bueno surrendered a .30-cal. Garand rifle.

In a related development, an NPA rebel who recently returned to the fold of the law was shot dead in Bula, Camarines Sur by a suspected communist hit man operating in the area.

A military report said Eddie Sarte, 46, was shot with an M-16 rifle while watching television in his home Saturday evening.

The gunman poked the barrel of his rifle gun through a hole in the back door and fired once, hitting the victim in the right temple causing his instant death. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

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THERE IS NO PRICE TO NATIONAL HONOR

LEAH Salonga, Cecille Licad, and Liza Macuja have made a collective name in excellence for the Filipino artist. World-class performances by Filipinos in the arts, sports, literature and other fields have done the Philippines proud.

For their inspiration and respect for Filipinos that they have earned abroad, the government sees them as an example of what the Filipino artist should be.

For this reason, members of the placement industry, deeply concerned over the plight of overseas performing artists (OPAs), have taken a strong position in advocating changes in the assessment and certification of talents. There is no price to national honor.

Calls for reforms could not have come at a better time and under the most appropriate leadership of Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA).

TESDA has now changed the rules in assessment and certification, thereby leading to the decline of deployment of OPAs. Under Director General Dante V. Liban, the passing rate of 95 percent has decreased to 55 percent. With the numbers going down, the system's credibility has gone up. And some people are hurting.

These reforms rationalize the processing, assessment and certification of OPAs and the speedy release of the Artist Record Book (ARB) needed by these performers in their deployment to Japan.

Liban's opening up of testing venues to new players and the accreditation of new testing officers (TOs) from the academe and the TV-movie industry, have drastically cut off the industry's multimillion-peso corruption victimizing recruits themselves. It is no surprise that Liban is vilified in media and around the President to discredit him, in a campaign funded by the Mafia inside the OPAs industry.

His critics led by PARADA ask for Liban's resignation purportedly to give the NBI a free hand in its investigation. But up until today, no formal complaint has been filed against Liban and no such investigation is ongoing. In fact, it was Liban himself who went to NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco weeks before to follow up on reports of irregularities in the issuance of ARBs.

PARADA accuses Liban's assistant, Brig. Gen. Nestor Castillo, of not acting on the case of 5 ARBs allegedly issued illegally. But when Castillo asked for documents to support this charge, PARADA failed to provide these. If the group is sincere and possesses evidence, they could have gone to the police or the Ombudsman to directly file charges.

Director General Liban has assured us that there is no truth to the allegation that he printed calendars with the pictures of himself and his family using government money, and he said PARADA's claim is nothing but a cheap lie.

We denounce as irresponsible and vicious these ongoing attacks against DG Liban, particularly allegations of payola from testing venue owners. Again, if they think laws were violated, then let the courts and not the media be the venue for redress.

Lastly, we support Liban's move to transfer the competency management of the OPAs to the private sector within the year, with TESDA retaining on the mandate to perform oversight functions.

Liban has proven his sincerity, capability and determination to institute changes in the Authority towards eradicating graft and corruption in the processing, assessment and certification of OPAs. This we can vouch for, and we bear witness to, in the few months that he has been in office at TESDA.

We urge all stakeholders in the industry to unite and support Director General Liban in his fight against corruption, incompetence and plain complacency amidst various evils. Together, let us smash the tentacles of syndicates that feed on exploitation and deceit!

REFORMS IN THE ASSESSMENT AND ACCREDITATION OF OVERSEAS PERFORMING ARTISTS (OPAS) INITIATED BY DIRECTOR GENERAL DANTE V. LIBAN

- Appointment of Testing Administrators (TAs) to administer the assessment process, from registration of applicants, verification of talents' identity to submission of results to TESDA.
- TAs enforce TESDA rules and regulations during the testing process to ensure a fair and honest talent competency assessment.
- Testing officers (TOs) are enjoined to either "PASS" or "FAIL" applicants on the merit of their performances alone, and other considerations such as money and perks are strictly prohibited, violation of which subjects the offender to TESDA sanctions.
- Cellphones which before had been used to pass information on how to rig the process have been banned during testing.
- Manipulation of resuts by TOs is greatly reduced by doing away with the numerical rating. They now grade applicants with "PASS" or "FAIL" marks only.
- TOs are notified very close to actual testing duty. At 8 p.m. the night before, they are asked to confirm their availability for testing the next day. At 7 a.m. on the day itself, they are advised on the venue and its address, leaving them two hours to report there.
- The ranks of TOs have been beefed up by new and respected members coming from the academe and the movie-TV industry, thus professionalizing the assessment process in singing, dance and production show.
- New testing venues have been accredited, with better and state-of-the-art facilities, making the venues accessible to artist-applicants from all corners of Metro Manila, and really suitable for talent assessment.
- The existing syndicates composed of unscrupulous owners of training and promotions centers, recruitment agencies, testing venue owners and TOs have been effectively neutralized if not DISMANTLED with the establishment of these reforms, thus putting order to the assessment and accreditation of OPAs once and for all.
- Training centers for OPAs have been placed under the Unified Tech-Voc Program Registration and Accreditation System (UTPRAS). The system enables TESDA to require training centers (TCs) to develop curriculums, upgrade equipment and facilities and utilize duly-approved instructional materials, aside from a regular trainor's training program. Some 100 TCs are now accredited under the program.
- Director General Liban and the TESDA Board have affirmed, and are starting the mechanism, for the eventual transfer of the talent assessment process from the government to the industry leaders. A Technical Working Group (TWG) has been composed to prepare recommendations by March, 2003 and submit these to the TESDA Board for proper action.

Despite the reforms, why the anger?

	Before the reforms	After the Liban-initiated reforms
No. of entertainers tested	42,000	42,000
Passing Rate	95%	55%
No. of entertainers passed (5-month period)	39,900	23,000
Min. commission paid to promoters/recruiters monthly	$ 500 / mo.	$ 500 / mo.
Total commissions paid in a month	$ 19,950,000 / mo.	$ 11,550,000 / mo.
Total commissions paid in 5-month period	$ 99, 750,000 / mo.	$ 57,750,000 / mo.

At any given time, there are:

- 50,000 Filipino entertainers in Japan
- $ 500 each is deducted from entertainers and given to promoters and recruiters monthly
- $ 25,000,000 in total amount is given to promoters and recruiters monthly
- or an equivalent of P 1,300,000,000 monthly
- in six months P 7,800,000.000.

Promoters and recruiters lost this much money due to the Liban reforms:$ 42,000,000 or conservatively P 2,184,000,000.

Note: Are taxes paid on these incomes?

TESDA-ACCREDITED TESTING OFFICERS FOR OPAS

NUGGET AQUINO
BERNINI ABELLA
DIEGO CAGAHASTIAN
J. L. STA. MARIA
VICTOR A. ORIA
JONAR DORLA GAMILLA
TESS E. TOLEDO
MAR LOPEZ
PAUL FACILE
MICHAEL 'KIM' LESACA
JANETH PALMERA
OMON DOMINGO
EDUARDO MARFORI
VICTOR WOOD
JOSE ARIS ANTINERO
MAURO GIA SAMONTE
CESAR 'BOYET' MANAHAN
B. CHRISTOPHER
GEORGE VAIL KABRISTANTE
GAMALIEL R. VIRAY
ENRIQUE I. DY-LIACCO
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IRAQ WAR JITTERS

Oil firms told to increase stockpile

By Ronnel W. Domingo

DOMESTIC oil companies have been asked to maintain a minimum inventory of oil supplies of up to 30 days to avert a shortage in case of a United States war with Iraq.

"The escalating tension between the United States and Iraq underscores the need for the Philippines to adopt and implement prudent initiatives to ensure the continuous, adequate and stable supply of petroleum products," said Energy Secretary Vincent Perez Jr. after the energy department released yesterday the circular.

The government has been monitoring the possible impact of a war in the Middle East because of the Philippines' dependence on oil, especially for the transport sector, said Perez.

The order requires all oil companies and bulk suppliers, except refiners, operating in the country to maintain a "minimum inventory" of 15 to 30 days supply of petroleum products at any time.

Refiners Petron Corp., Pilipinas Shell Petroleum and Caltex Phil. are required to maintain stocks of liquid fuels for at least 30 days.

Other oil firms and bulk suppliers are required to keep stocks good for at least 14 days.

All oil companies must keep seven days' supply of liquefied petroleum gas, widely used for cooking.

The required stockpiles do not include imports that are in transit to the Philippines.

But the oil firms were given the option of deciding on the type and mix of petroleum products that their inventories should include.

The guidelines also gave the Energy Secretary the authority to determine when implementation of the minimum inventory should start and for how long.

The circular said the order should take effect "in cases where domestic and international events may threaten or restrict oil supply."

Such cases include, but are not limited to, terrorist attacks and war in the Middle East and in other regions from where the Philippines gets or through which it transports its oil supply.

Perez also urged the Manila city government to allow Petron, Shell and Caltex to continue to use the Pandacan oil depots.

City Hall officials claimed that the Big Three oil companies had failed to comply with a memorandum of understanding for them to scale down the size of the depots and build safety buffer zones between the depots and residential communities.

"While we believe that (City Hall's) stand on this issue heeds the call of Manileños for a renewed urban development program, the greater national and public interest dictate that the country's fuel supply be preserved and protected," Perez said.

Meralco blames transport cost for rise in PPA

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE MANILA Electric Co. yesterday said the rise in purchased power adjustment (PPA) charges was being driven by the increased cost of transporting electricity rather than the cost of generating it.

"Our computations show an average adjustment in transmission charges of around 80 centavos for every kilowatt hour purchased by Meralco," said Ivanna de la Peña, Meralco's chief of utility economics.

De la Peña said the increase in transmission charges had cancelled out the reduction in generation charges that resulted from the "unbundling" of the National Power Corp.'s rates.

Meralco buys its power from the Napocor and from independent power producers.

The distribution giant clarified that the cost of power from Napocor had gone up by 8.5 centavos per kwh—including transmission and generation charges—and not just one centavo as earlier reports quoting the Department of Energy had said.

The energy department yesterday warned Meralco customers of higher electricity bills because PPA charges had gone up by 13 centavos per kWh from P2.61 in December to P2.73 in January.

Meralco officials said the increase would add P26 in the monthly bill of consumers using up to 200 kWh of electricity.

In a separate statement, the DOE said the Energy Regulatory Commission had released the final draft of a new regulatory framework in determining the transmission charge of the National Transmission Corp.

The new framework, called a performance-based rate-making (PBR) method, would provide a maximum annual revenue cap that is pegged, and adjusted, to changes in the consumer price index.

The PBR would also include a provision for adjustments of rates for over- and under-recovery of costs.

PNP tightens gun control

By TJ Burgonio

POLICE Director General Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. has ordered the temporary suspension of the issuance of gun licenses and permits to carry firearms outside residence (PTCFOR) following the furor over the killing of law graduate Jose Ramon Llamas.

Ebdane said the suspension would give the Firearms and Explosives Division (FED) the opportunity to review its current procedures and to have them amended where needed to ensure that gun permits or licenses were issued to responsible gun owners.

"He wants to have a stricter gun control in the wake of Llamas' killing," Director Ricardo de Leon, police director for Police Community Relations, said yesterday. He said the suspension would only be for "a short period of time."

He said security guards, who were not covered by the order because of the nature of their job, could apply for gun licenses with the FED anytime.

Llamas, 26, a law graduate from the Ateneo de Manila University, was gunned down in Pasay City on Jan. 10 after a road altercation with a motorcycle-riding man.

The suspect in the killing, Cola Ditato, remains at large.

However, initial investigation showed that Ditato was not on the FED's list of licensed gun holders.

So far, the national police has issued 813,089 gun licenses to private individuals and government officials.

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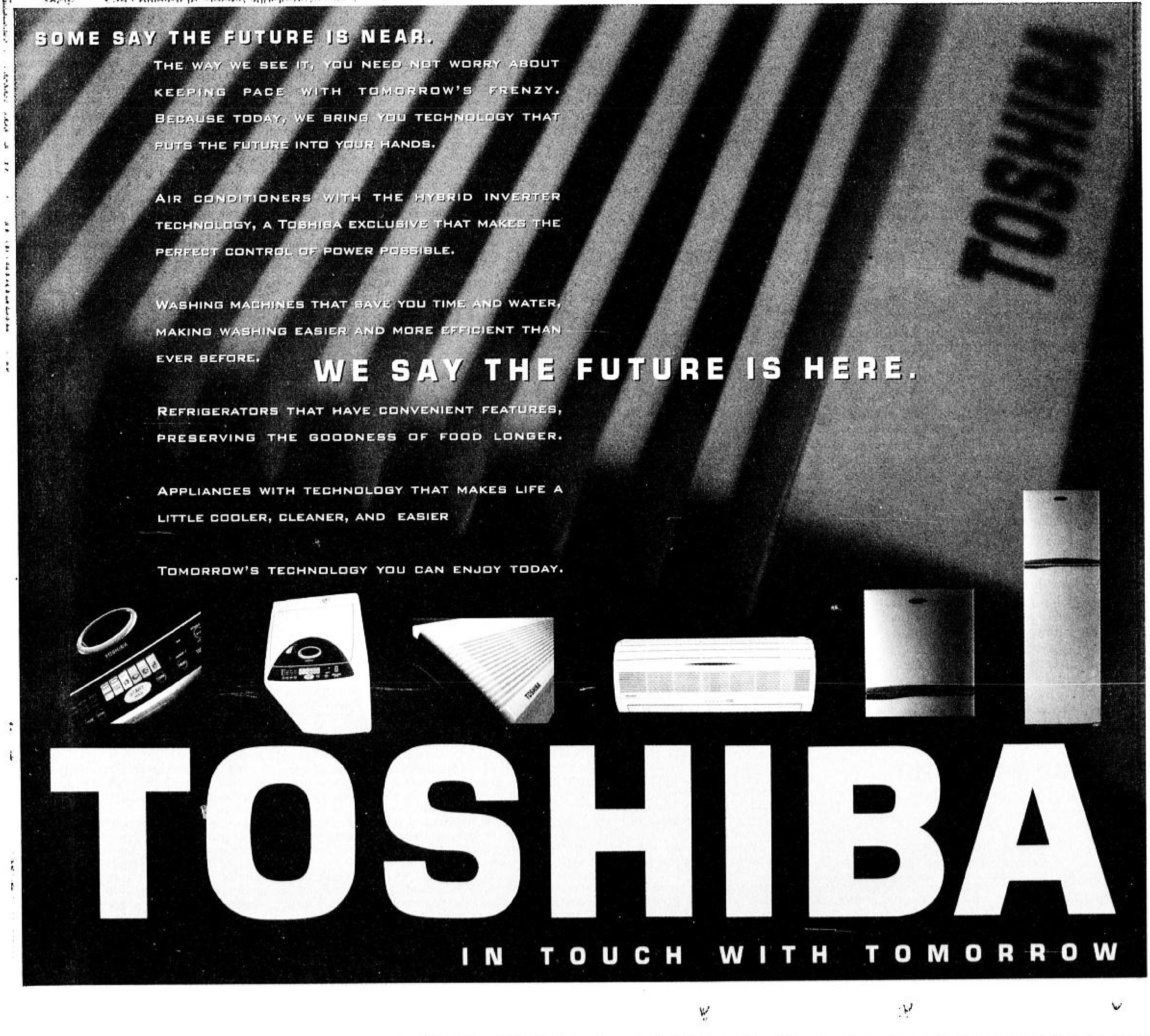

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OPINION

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Corruption

EDITORIAL

"WHAT was Edsa II?" President Macapagal-Arroyo asked during the celebration marking the second anniversary of the second people power revolt that catapulted her to the presidency. "I tell you, it was the most powerful answer of the weak to the corruption of the powerful."

And she was right, of course. For while the various groups from left to right of the political spectrum which joined forces at Edsa had their own agenda, the single overriding objective that brought them together was to topple a president who had been exposed to be corrupt.

But the day Ms Macapagal was installed in office, the fight against graft and corruption seems to have stalled. The trial for plunder of her ousted predecessor, Joseph Estrada, has proceeded ever so slowly, and it has been business as usual since for the many government officials who regard public service as an opportunity to get rich without working up a sweat.

Ms Macapagal also had the bad fortune of inheriting so many graft-ridden projects, like the construction of Naia Terminal 3 and the Impsa deal. And it didn't help that some people close to her, including First Gentleman Mike Arroyo and former Justice Secretary Hernando Perez, were linked to some shady transactions, even if unproven.

Thus, there is a real need to restart the campaign against corruption. And it is not only because Ms Macapagal has to be "faithful to the spirit of Edsa II," but more importantly because, as she put it, "corruption is the worst enemy of progress and social justice as it robs the state of the resources to prosecute the war against poverty."

How dearly corruption has cost the nation has been shown by several studies. In 2001, according to the Department of Budget and Management, the government lost some P21 billion due to corruption in the procurement of goods, infrastructure and services and about P74 billion from "leakages" in combined public-private transactions, including purchases for build-operate-transfer projects. The World Bank, in a study done in 2000, said the government lost about $48 billion because of corruption over a period of 20 years. And Morgan Stanley Research estimated the losses from corruption, tax evasion and inefficient revenue collection to have added up to $205 billion from 1965 to 2001.

Such staggering figures are quite difficult to comprehend by themselves. But one gets an idea of how much corruption is costing the nation by considering that P95 billion can build 500,000 low-cost houses or 10,000 kilometers of concrete roads, according to the DBM. On the other hand, the $205 billion in revenue losses is much more than enough to wipe out the country's total domestic and foreign obligations of $110 billion in 2001, with enough left to keep the government running for at least the next five years.

To say that it is time to plug this huge drain on government resources and jail those responsible for it is to state the obvious. But so long as politics guided government decisions, top officials, including the President, tended to turn a blind eye to all but the most blatant cases of graft and corruption, like the continuously escalating cost of the President Diosdado Macapagal Boulevard at the Manila Bay reclamation project. Now with the President renouncing her political plans for 2004, she can really get down to the business of rooting out corruption in government no matter who gets hurt in the process.

This is a war that must be won if the government intends to free the resources needed to put the economy back on its feet, restore morality in public service and change the country's international image as a haven of corruption. It is almost impossible to make some major inroads in the fight against poverty in the 15 months that is left of her presidency. But in this war against corruption, Ms Macapagal stands a much better chance of scoring some decisive victories. If she does, she is assured of an honored place in history.

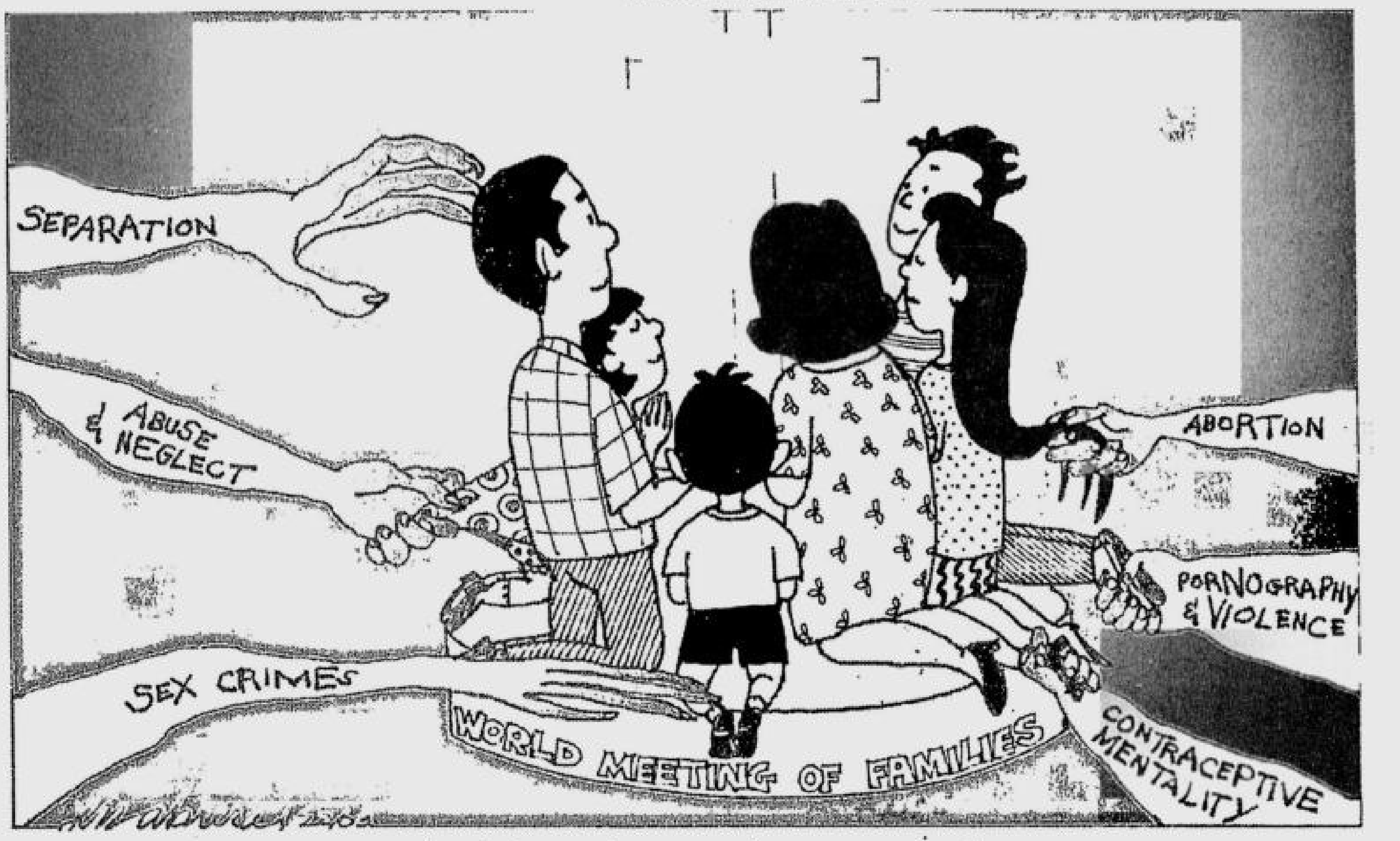
Dealing with Kim

FOREIGN COMMENT

NORTH Korea's "Great Leader," Kim Il-sung, believes the best way to negotiate with the rest of the world is through escalation of threats.

Kim is enigmatic, isolated and paranoid but he is not dumb. His timing has been impeccable. He created the current crisis when the Bush administration was focusing on a possible war with Iraq. He exploited the anti-American attitude of the new South Korean president. And he is playing off the United States against the probable reactions of China and Russia. The United States cannot fix this problem alone. But it must provide leadership by working with the United Nations, and especially with neighboring South Korea, Japan, China and Russia, in order to defuse this crisis and, most importantly, develop programs to bring North Korea out of its Stalinist isolation and into the world community.

The Daily Times (Farmington, New Mexico)



Formidable obstacles to reforms

COMMENTARY

Anna Marie A. Karaos
Institute on Church and Social Issues

MANY civil society groups, whether part of the recently formed December 30 Movement or not, are ready to engage the Macapagal administration on its 18-month reform program. Their hopes for change boosted by the President's latest campaign against corruption announced in her speech last Jan. 20, a number of NGOs, citizens' groups and people's organizations have decided to take advantage of the opportunity opened by the President's withdrawal from the presidential race to steer the government's actions toward the reform agenda they have long advocated, often with much frustration.

There have been debates, however, within civil society, and mostly among the more politically oriented groups, not only whether the Macapagal administration is serious about reform but also whether it is capable of summoning both the institutional and financial resources needed to get the reforms underway before the elections next year. Political will, granted that it exists, is one thing but institutional capacity is quite another. Those who are yet to be convinced that some real gains would result from this latest pronouncement from the government, want to see that there is a genuine interest and drive to unclog the bottlenecks, remedy the inefficiencies and overcome the resistance that have been holding up reform efforts particularly toward poverty reduction.

When one considers the government's track record not just in instituting policy reforms but also in implementing pro-poor programs, one is confronted with a multitude of reasons why projects aimed at improving the delivery of basic services to the poor fail to move. Contrary to what most people think, the lack of financial resources is often the least difficult problem to overcome. In fact, in some cases, there are resources either already earmarked or waiting to be tapped that remain unutilized because of other constraints. Bureaucratic inefficiencies, the absence of enabling legislation or policies, or conflicting development paradigms of different agencies or officials sometimes pose more formidable obstacles to the smooth implementation of projects. Problems such as these will not immediately get resolved simply because the President has foregone seeking reelection.

In the urban sector, the Macapagal administration, beginning two years ago, has undertaken measures toward the distribution of government-owned lands to urban poor informal dwellers. In Metro Manila, where about a third of the country's urban poor population resides, thousands of families now await the implementation of a program that would legalize their tenure and install or upgrade community infrastructure and services as a result of these proclamations. But after the land proclamations were issued, little more has happened to these communities. Given the reform momentum supposedly created by the Dec. 30 announcement of the President, one would expect the land distribution program to immediately start in these proclaimed areas as a demonstration of what a "strong republic" can do for its numerous poor and needy citizens.

Meanwhile, there are programs for the urban poor that have either received Official Development Assistance (ODA) or are being considered for ODA funding, that have not moved over the past year. Two such programs being assisted by the Asian Development Bank are worth noting for their potentially large impact in terms of improving the living standards of the country's urban poor.

One is a 15-year program which involves assisting Metro Manila local governments to plan and implement urban development interventions for slum eradication and urban upgrading. This program is aimed at enhancing the level of service and infrastructure provision to urban poor communities and improving poor people's access to low-cost housing. A second project involves providing loans to local governments of cities across the country, in partnership with communities and NGOs, for site development and provision of secure tenure for poor informal settlers. It will also establish microcredit facilities which the urban poor can access to finance site development, house improvement and microenterprise development.

An important feature of these programs is their thrust toward empowering local governments so they can more effectively perform their role in urban development, with particular emphasis on addressing urban poverty. The advantages of decentralizing the delivery of basic services have long been acknowledged by development experts, but there have been few initiatives to build the technical and financial capacities of local governments in this area. The ADB programs therefore fill an important gap.

Given the objectives of these programs and the resources they offer, the proclaimed areas should logically be the place to start implementing these programs. The NGOs and communities which have lobbied for the land proclamations and have been closely monitoring government programs for the urban poor, are actually in the dark as to why projects such as those supported by the ADB have moved so slowly. In the past, the usual reason given for the Philippines' poor absorptive capacity for ODA was the government's failure to provide counterpart funding for ODA-assisted projects. In the case of the ADB urban poor programs, the lack of counterpart funding does not seem to be the main reason for the delays.

This early the reform momentum seems to be petering out, even as the President's civil society allies are working hard to hammer out a realistic but substantial reform package for the next 17 months. They must realize however that having a well-crafted agenda is not nearly as important as demonstrating first that the government has the institutional capacity to get existing programs off the ground.

'T'yak 'yon'

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

COMES now another group proffering to help unite this country. Or threatening to rid it of those who disunite it.

That is the Bangon Pilipino Movement, spearheaded by Mike Velarde, the colorful (not least, sartorially) head of El Shaddai. The group aims to scrutinize the *politicos*, particularly those that congregate in the House, to see how they are rising to the challenge of being honest and helpful. They will identify politicians who are not living up to expectations, or are thwarting them. The BPM will publicly show "that what they are doing is wrong." That applies both to the administration and opposition lawmakers.

Velarde himself says he is closing the El Shaddai gatherings every Saturday at the Luneta to political statements, or downright electioneering. He says he's gotten tired of politicians who have been flocking to his open-air church of late ostensibly to pray but in reality to campaign. "It is high time they became real followers of El Shaddai before we allow them to be on the stage."

That is all very well, except for one thing. Namely that Velarde in particular forgets his own enormous contributions to turning his theater of worship into a platform for electioneering.

Deputy House Speaker Raul Gonzalez has a point when he says Velarde has insulted politicians. "He used to find it advantageous to be seen with politicians, especially during the time of President Joseph Estrada. All of a sudden he's forsaken them? That is a little strange."

This country may be forgetful, but it is not that forgetful. Most Filipinos, I imagine, will still remember that it was Velarde who endorsed Erap for president when he came over to pray with the El Shaddai flock one fine day in early 1998. Each time he enumerated the virtues of the president he would like his flock to vote for, he would look at Erap, and say, "*T'yak 'yon!*" to his flock's wild applause. The games he play are not always divine, they are often *baduy*.

For his pains, he was rewarded liberally, not least with an abundant flow of roasted cows and pigs to his gatherings, particularly on important occasions, such as his birthday. All of which gave the nation to see the other side of people huddled together in prayerful silence, sending flickering flames from candles rippling through the dark. That was the scene Moses might have seen after he came down from the mountain, tablets in hand, his faithless flock feasting and dancing and worshipping Baal.

I am not saying that Velarde and company are not entitled to pitch in and help their country *bangon*, or get up. I am saying that before they do this, they should first acknowledge their contribution to making their country *dapa*, or fall flat on its face. And, for Christ's or Shaddai's sake, showing some remorse.

That's what I've been assailed by these past few weeks in all this talk about "ending politics" and uniting the country for reform and progress. The individuals, or groups, who have been especially eager to help, and have rushed out to do so, have also been especially eager to make us forget what they have done to thwart reform and progress. You'd think the obstacle to unity, reform and progress was everyone except themselves. In fact it is they more than others.

That starts with GMA herself. I'm all for unity, I'm all for supporting a President who has renounced her ambitions to run. But I am not all for forgetting what she has done to divide the people over the last couple of years, if only because that is crucial to the project of reform and progress. To undo the sins of the past, you must see the sins of the past. If we are rived by bitter factionalism today, it is because GMA did not make that decision earlier. Indeed, it is because she showed only a single-minded dedication to run from the start. She does not acknowledge that, and she will be no nearer to rallying the country around her than when she began.

The same is true of civil society. I'm all for civil society chipping in, I'm all for civil society having a say in what happens to the country over the next year and a half. But I am not all for forgetting what it has done too to allow iniquity to flourish. That is by falling into a vast silence, particular in the face of monumental iniquities such as GMA's public humiliation of Acsa Ramirez and blind adoption of George Bush's "war against terror." Civil society does not acknowledge that and it will be no nearer to reclaiming, or even rediscovering, its voice than it is now.

The same is truer of Mike Velarde and company. I'm all for their desire to scrutinize public office, I'm all for their flailing at those who do not carry out their duties. But I am not all for forgetting what they have done to turn this country into a Sodom and Gomorrah, not least by conscripting religion for selfish, secular ends. Indeed, along with the Iglesia ni Cristo, for their policy of making the flock vote not according to their conscience but according to their word. Let him who has no sin cast the first stone at the politicians.

What does this all come down to but more of the same "reconciliation" we had after the first Edsa? A call to unity and the healing of wounds premised on forgetting the past, a call to the forgiveness of sins without repentance and restitution. People who agree to be silent over a crime do not unite, they conspire. People who put Band Aid over third degree burns do not cure wounds, they make them fester. People who forgive and forget without demanding penitence and penance do not promote reconciliation, they merely reconcile themselves with the devil.

Jose Rizal said it best: You can't see where you came from, you won't know where you're going. *T'yak na t'yak 'yon.*

* * *

Comments to dequiros@vasia.com

Still deeply divided

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

THE COMMEMORATION of the anniversary of Edsa II on Tuesday disclosed that the nation is as deeply divided as it was on Jan. 21, 2001, when people power drove President Joseph Estrada out of office.

The multi-sectoral groups that coalesced behind the Estrada-resign movement are now fragmented and are lashing at the government they helped install into power. The Left-wing militants have clashed with the police security ring at the Edsa Shrine after they were blocked in their march toward the shrine. In rallies in other parts of the city, the militants denounced the failure of the Macapagal administration to help the poor.

The power elite that took office after the toppling of Estrada occupied the shrine, thereby isolating themselves from the rabble outside. Not since the May 1, 2002 rebellion of the poor—barely four months after the President was installed in office, with the Supreme Court bestowing it legitimacy—had the Macapagal administration been under siege, this time from an informal alliance of its own intractable adversaries and its former allies in the streets.

The elements of mob rule, all acting with the belief that they are living up to the creed of democratic dissent, played out in the streets last Tuesday their conception of anarchic democracy, minus the scale and the fury they showed in the turbulence of Edsa II.

The anniversary showed that the die-hard Estrada allies remained as irreconcilable as ever to the legitimacy of the Macapagal administration. A group led by Estrada stalwarts—former Senators Francisco Tatad and Juan Ponce Enrile—is spearheading the move to impeach President Macapagal on essentially the same grounds on which Estrada was impeached, i.e. corruption. In an effort to repeat the drama of Edsa II, they are demanding her resignation and trivializing the process of impeachment as a last constitutional resort to replace leaders who have betrayed the people's trust.

They are demanding her resignation and this time, their demand is supported by the pugnacious Linda Montayre and her group, the People's Constituent Assembly, which is perpetually unhappy with the state of things unless their view of the world is accepted by the Macapagal administration. Thus, while a realignment of malcontents is under way, people power and its new form of expression are further reducing democracy into a caricature .

Estrada did not miss the chance to ventilate his old and tiresome tirades against the administration. He dismissed the President's call for a campaign against corruption. The anniversary only proved that the President has not won any ground in the Estrada constituency and the old divide has remained an unbridgeable gulf.

Last Tuesday, just three weeks after the President announced that she would not run for election in 2004, everyone of consequence—including the President's allies—was not talking about a national consensus or a national agenda. Their concern was over the favorite Filipino pastime of engaging in endless debates and doing very little to accomplish national objectives.

In the sanctuary of the Edsa Shrine, Jaime Cardinal Sin talked about his objections to constitutional change, proposing instead that a referendum be held to determine whether the people approve of the campaign in Congress to change the Charter by 2004. But he did call on the administration to exercise "political will" to draw the nation's attention away from the debate over constitutional change.

Cardinal Sin took a swipe at the politics of celebrity when he said that the nation needed more heroes and fewer celebrities. "The nation is in great need of heroes,". he said. "We lack heroes. We have plenty of celebrities." He said the young are "looking for examples to inspire them."

As he made the homily, a cohort of celebrities—movie actors—held their own celebration of Esda II. Well-known actors, arms locked with Sen. Loi Estrada's, marched toward the Senate to lobby against the implementation of the value-added tax slapped on professionals, including actors and entertainers. The march was the actors' way of interpreting civic duty.

The Bureau of Internal Revenue has pointed out that professionals are the highest paid category of income earners, and yet, because of their exemption from the value-added tax for the past five years, they are not paying enough income taxes. According to the Department of Finance, professionals, who earned talent and consultancy fees, paid only P620 million in taxes in 2001—a fraction of the total of P10.75 billion in taxes paid by professionals, self-employed and mixed-income earners. In 2001, P80.24 billion in taxes was paid by individuals, whether wage earners or business executives. Of this amount, the bulk—P66.3 billion—was paid by salaried workers. Compensation workers, including wage earners, account for 38 percent of individual incomes but contributed 83 percent of tax collection. Salaried individuals have carried a tax burden eight times heavier than that falling on professionals and business executives.

At the time when the government is strapped for cash to finance pump-priming programs and is groaning from the weight of an escalating budget deficit, the concern of the actors is to shirk the burden of taxation by underpaying their taxes. But after the election of Estrada to the presidency in 1998, actors and celebrities have developed a swollen head over their political clout and are now flexing their muscles to maintain their privileges and to defeat government measures seeking the equitable distribution of the tax burden.

And so, on the Edsa II anniversary, any sign of building a consensus on a national agenda was smothered as elements of clashing narrow interests came into play.

What is a family?

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

AT FIRST, I thought the public service ad produced by ABS-CBN was going to adhere to the stereotypical view of the family. "*Ang ama ang haligi ng pamilya* (The father is the pillar of the family)," the spiel began, going on to enumerate the father's many duties, from earning a living to protecting the family from harm. "*Ang ina ang ilaw ng tahanan* (The mother is the light of the home)," it went on, providing guidance and care to the children, and seeing to the family's health and wellbeing.

But the ad had more to say about the Filipino family. These days, it said, both father and mother have to be breadwinner, protector and caregiver. But no matter how roles may shift and change, it concluded, the family remains the bedrock of society.

The network's public service ad aired in time for the Fourth World Meeting of Families, which begins today. An international gathering convened by the Vatican, the World Meeting of Families is meant to focus attention on the concerns of families the world over. "The family is under attack" is the line organizers have used in their public information campaign. And from what I can glean from their own PSAs as well as from public statements of key Church figures, the "attacks" come in varied forms—domestic violence, parental abandonment, sexual promiscuity, hedonistic lifestyles and values, even family planning, sex education and the eternal bogey of homosexuality.

But the opening of this international gathering is as good an opportunity as any to reflect, seriously and with a spirit of openness, on what it really means to be a family, and to belong to one. As the Reproductive Health Advocacy Network (RHAN) puts it: the meeting "offers a unique opportunity not only to celebrate the Family but more importantly, reflect and examine our notions in relation to it, and evaluate whether these reflect realities and result in addressing needs brought about by contexts and experiences of people in families."

* * *

REALITY, according to the statement of the Network, no longer reflects the "myth" of the traditional nuclear family. "Continuously clinging to, romanticizing and idealizing such narrow and traditional family concepts have, over time, resulted in problematic situations especially for the women family members."

The RHAN groups decry, for one, the tendency to "put a premium on the structure and composition, rather than the quality of relationships within families." This has resulted in society "turning a blind eye to, sometimes even accepting as normal, the rampant abuses and violence suffered by women from their partners or husbands in the name of keeping the family together."

Studies have shown, they said, that husbands and male partners are the primary abusers of women, while social and cultural pressures serve to keep women in abusive relationships.

* * *

REFUSING to acknowledge, recognize or validate other forms of partnerships, relationships and family structures result in "discrimination against family forms outside of the heterosexual, nuclear family ideal," the Network contends.

Citing national statistics, the Network says the nuclear family is no longer as prevalent as we may think it is, nor are "alternative" forms all that rare, either.

Single-headed households are estimated to comprise about one-third of all households in the country. Data gathered by the National Statistics Office show that as of the year 2000, almost 2.4 million "heads of households" were widowed and 560,000 were divorced/separated. "Given women's longer average life span, it is safe to assume that a significant number of (these) families and/or households are headed by women."

An almost equal number (2.44 million) belong to the category of "others," while 622,300 individuals are classified as "unknown." These are people in "other" arrangements (including those living-in or in same-sex relationships) and those whose civil status is undetermined.

"The ideal two-parent nuclear family is fast becoming a myth," states RHAN. "Whether brought about by death, temporary or permanent breakups, single-headed families exist in big numbers and cannot be ignored." And yet, institutional support for the single or solo parent is still scarce, even with the passage of the Solo Parents Welfare Act. The situation "is harsher on women who continue to be discriminated against in the economic and employment fields. This despite their taking on the economic and family responsibilities traditionally expected of men on top of their usual reproductive and household roles as mothers."

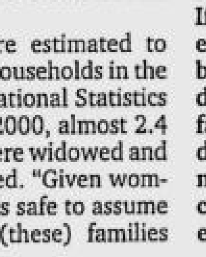
* * *

AND what about families sundered by migration and/or employment abroad or in some other place away from the family home? Some 7.4 million Filipinos work abroad, and about 60 percent of them are women. Oftentimes, they have parents, spouses and children left behind. The "social costs" of such separations may be difficult to account for, but they are real and exact a toll on everyone involved, from family members to communities.

Who will help such families? How will they remain intact despite the distance and estrangement?

Finally, a word about men and women in same-sex relationships. Is it only the sexual orientation of the couple that defines a family? If the partners truly love each other and treat each other with respect and caring, and if they bring up their children to be decent and productive human beings, are they any less valid a family unit? Asks RHAN: "Who has the right to define a family? Those outside or those who make up the unit? What is more important, the composition or the quality of the relationship existing in a family?"

Hurdles to marriage



LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

MY last column on parental objection to marriage drew mixed reactions. Many young people agreed that it is indeed practical to skip the costly and elaborate church wedding and opt for a simple one. One can avoid all the social difficulties by eloping, but then older folks maintain that this is not the right way to start a new life. Since I am over 40, aunts who disagreed with the column refrained from twisting my ears. I explained that having seen the torment that prospective grooms go through during the *pamanhikan,* we should dispense with some family traditions in the same way that fraternities, the PNP and PMA have to rid themselves of hazing. I come from a large Pampanga family where all 75 cousins speak at the same time, we have in-laws who want to get even by asking the prospect to sing, dance, or even answer esoteric questions on Catholic doctrine like—during abstinence is *balut* considered meat or an egg? Worse, during the interrogation, they might ask about contraception and oral sex.

At one *pamanhikan,* the man whom we had known for years—it was a long courtship and engagement—considered himself a part of the family. After dinner, everyone stood to bid each other goodbye, but one of my aunts remained seated and with her arms crossed on her chest exclaimed-"*teka muna, hindi pa hiningi ang kamay ng pamangkin ko!*" After a brief embarrassing silence everyone laughed and the poor groom went through the works. The ritual of asking for the maiden's hand can be a terrifying experience for the prospective groom and his father, so some families try to lighten things a bit. Someone I know, a military man, tried to defuse a tense situation with some humor. When they nervously asked for his daughter's hand in marriage he replied, "you only want her hand? Is there anything wrong with the rest of her?" Nobody laughed.

Speaking of parental objection one can cite Gregoria de Jesus' autobiography "*Mga Tala ng Aking Buhay*": "When I was about 18 years old, young men began to call at our house and among them was Andres Bonifacio, who came in the company (of) Ladislao Diwa and my cousin Teodoro Plata, then clerk of court, but none of them talked to me of love, since parents in those days were extremely careful and girls did not want people to know that they already had admirers.

"The truth, however, was that Andres Bonifacio had already informed my parents of his intentions and for nearly a year had been trying to win their approval although I knew nothing about it. Three months more elapsed before I learned that my father was against Bonifacio's suit because he was a freemason. The freemasons then were considered bad men by our elders because of the teachings of the friars; and precisely by that time I was beginning to like him a little."

Most people presume the paternal objection was based on Bonifacio's being a *bodeguero* from Tondo, a man who once made a living selling canes and paper fans. Oryang says her father objected to Bonifacio because he was a mason. I'd like to think it had something to do with age. In the late 19th century, age of consent for both males and females was 24, not 18 years like today. What complicated the marriage between Bonifacio and Gregoria de Jesus in 1894 was that Bonifacio was almost 30, a widower, and Oryang was only 18. If I were Oryang's father I would object too. Oryang continues:

"Six months later I had earnestly fallen in love with him, and my father, though opposed at first, in the end gave his consent because of his love for me and because I told him frankly of our love for each other. In deference to my parents, we were married in the Catholic church of Binondo in March 1893, with Restituto Javier and his wife Benita de Javier as sponsors, but the week following, we were married again in the house of our sponsors on what was called Oroquieta Street before all the Katipuneros at their request, since they did not recognize as valid our marriage in the Catholic Church."

Oryang's autobiography is a primary source and should be the last word on something as personal as her marriage, but historians seem to know much more about the past than the people who lived through it. When feminist historian Fe Mangahas pointed me in the direction of a little-known batch of documents in the National Archives on Oryang, I had to rethink not just my stereotype image of Bonifacio, but also the reliability of Oryang's memory and her memoirs.

From the above we know that Oryang's father gave his consent and that the marriage between Andres and Oryang was solemnized in Binondo church in March 1893. These archival documents prove that as late as December 1893 Andres and Oryang were not married. The archival documents also prove that parental objection to the marriage was so strong that Oryang was forcibly taken from their home in Caloocan and kept prisoner in Binondo to separate her from Bonifacio. Unknown to the two lovers was that they were actually only a few blocks from each other. The documents give a new twist to the story of Andres and Oryang that we think we know only too well.

(Conclusion on Friday)

* * *

Comments are welcome at ambeth@admu.edu.ph

Lessons from the farm

HIGH BLOOD

Silverio Baltasar

WE'D also like to know the concerns of the sixtysomething and above, what makes their blood pressure rise or makes them sit back, content that all's well with their world and with themselves. —**Ed.**

A DECADE after retirement from teaching, I find myself enjoying a farm in upland Cavite where the climate is cool, the people congenial and the land unspoiled by pollution from heavy industries. I am busier than ever. With one difference. My time is my own. I am my own boss (although my wife thinks differently).

My life today is a pastoral romance minus a shepherdess, influenced by Louis Bromfeld, Pearl Buck, James Herriot, Knut Hamsun and Willa Cather. I should include Vergil, Ecclessiastes, Leo Tolstoy and Henry David Thorreau. My library now includes a collection of agriculture magazines and the books of Zac Sarian. I have grown close to the staff of the Municipal Agriculture Office (MAO). When the MAO asked me if I were interested in putting up a biogas pilot project, I acceded only to find out that the original cost would be trebled. First, the rats got into the pit where the plastic digester was. We replaced the plastic. Then with the first heavy rains, the supporting wall of hollow blocks collapsed. Again we changed the plastic. Finally there was a leak at the base of the connecting pipe. So again we changed the plastic and the biogas system has run smoothly since then. It has been five years since we last did repairs. Since I live in town (and walk a kilometer and a half to the farm for my daily constitutional), Fidel's family benefits from the free fuel generated by the pigs. The environment benefits from the decrease of flies and the lessened stench.

Influenced by lectures and demos on agriculture projects, I have tried plastic mulch, gone organic with vegetables (but my helper Fidel continues to use chemical NPK for coffee, *calamansi* and other fruit trees), and experimented on rejuvenation of coffee trees, pruning, grafting, marcotting and in arching. As a fumbling amateur I have not always been successful.

My special patch is a field of about 200 square meters which faces the barangay road. Fidel cultivates the rest of the three hectares. As I hoe or plant or simply estivate in the shade of a langka tree, I can see the road and the passersby. We greet each other and I feel I belong. This area has a tree nursery, a project of the MAO and the Municipal and Agriculture Fisheries Council (MAFC). Again, there is an ulterior motive in my cooperation. I am learning to take care ("hands on" is the password) of young trees. I am now able to differentiate the seedlings of rambutan from those of *atis, guyabano, lanzones* or *santol*. There was a time when I could not distinguish between a newly sprouted *pechay* and a burgeoning weed. I have planted squash and fed the soil with cow and chicken droppings. The pig effluents from the biodigester flow into an open pit and Fidel uses the black liquid to water the north fields planted to vegetables. We use a 50-meter, two-inch hose but may have to get a longer hose so we can reach the corn fields. I still have to convince Fidel to go organic. The best argument is that it is practically free. After the hose and the motor are bought, the fertilizer comes free. Fidel has developed a taste for lettuce and looks forward to another harvest of the crispy, leafy vegetable. For the past few months I have harvested for home consumption fresh vegetables like *pechay, mustasa, sitao, okra, talong* and *kangkong*. Some of the seeds came fiom the MAO, others from farmer friends. I cultivate friends and develop my fields with the help of their bounty, praise the Lord.

At present our provincial governor is bent to boost agriculture. I have attended seminars on coffee (coffee trees are supposed to be responsible to a high degree for the water level in upland Cavite), organic farming, vegetable production and hog raising. We have a farmers' organization that takes care of cattle dispersal. A cow is lent to a farmer until she gives birth and then the cow is passed on to another farmer. I now have five cows that started from one borrowed cow and expect an increase of at least one calf a year. The MAO also has a pig dispersal program where piglets are given to farmers who will raise them to become sows and from the litter, the MAO gets two piglets to be redistributed. Sometimes some piglets do not become sows. They are sold or slaughtered because of "circumstances" such as a marriage in the family, an illness, an accident, matriculation needs, fiestas or elections.

My rural schedule: the church bells wake me up, I take a light breakfast, walk to the farm, say hello to the Alas-as River, check on animals and plants on the farm, chat with neighbors Yoly and Andoy, Sinta and Aleen, Goyang and Mario, Apen, Rose and the mayor's kin (he lives on the same barrio street), and back in town, I make the rounds of the MAO, Sangguniang Bayan and Planning offices, and get coffee logged. After a simple lunch (there are several restaurants in town) I take a siesta to FM music; I read, type and do crossword puzzles till late afternoon. Then I sit on a low cement wall and watch the world go by. I go back to my room at dusk to write letters and send a text message to my wife that I will bring dressed chicken, *pechay* and *okra* when I go home this weekend. I send my son a text message to get me an appointment with the dentist. He will foot the bill. I send my daughter a text message and her daughter answers. Claire wants a wife for her chicken that has become a rooster.

There are glum days when I feel old: the bones creak, the body aches and the libido sleeps. But then I think tomorrow the sun will shine and the plants will grow.

Tomorrow I shall continue to cultivate my garden.

Silverio Baltasar, 75, is a retired professor of English and member of the Cavite Historical Society.

THEY SAID

She really means it

"What does she have to gain by making announcements if she does not really mean it? So, I believe she is sincere about being a good President."

—Former President Corazon Aquino on doubts raised on President Macapagal-Arroyo's intentions in renouncing the presidential race

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Maturity and age in leadership

FORMER PRESIDENT Fidel V. Ramos' suggestion to "pick a young president in 2004," just like Britain and China, is sound but contestable. During these troubled times, the country will fare much better under a mature leadership. As a wise man once said, "some citizens are so good that nothing a leader can do will make them better. Others are so incorrigible that nothing can be done to improve them. But the great bulk of the people go with the moral tide of the moment. The leader must help create that tide."

Can one who is young and inexperienced lead this nation to progress and prosperity? No way. "Reason and calm judgment, (are) the qualities specially belonging to a leader," says Tacitus. They go with age.

So why not the likes of Tito Guingona, the nationalist respected by the likes of former US envoys Bosworth and Armacost? Or Danding Cojuangco, the industrialist par excellence with a golden touch like Midas? Or even FVR himself, the 73-year-old retired general who simply will not fade away?

—ERICK SAN JUAN,
Suite 1402, 1st e-Bank Tower,
Paseo de Roxas, Makati City

Intramuros facilities now much improved

THIS is in reaction to Neal H. Cruz's column of Jan. 9 titled, "The mayor's plans for Manila."

He wrote: "If the Intamuros Administration will only wake up and do its job of reviving and rebuilding the Walled City, Manila will become attractive again for domestic and foreign tourists."

Ever since the Intramuros Administration (IA) was attached to the Department of Tourism (DOT) in 1986, it has not been remiss in its duty to enhance Intramuros as the prime tourist destination in the Philippines. In fact, the Walled City is quite popular among foreign and domestic visitors, with its historic walls and fortifications, museums, shops and restaurants, function areas and cultural programs.

Intramuros is the centerpiece for Visit Philippines 2003. The DOT, Philippine Tourism Authority (PTA), Philippine Convention and Visitors Corp. (PCVC) and IA are working very hard to make it more attractive to tourists. Adequate street lighting is being installed and more rest rooms are being put up. Everything is being done to ensure orderliness and cleanliness in the area.

We will gladly take Cruz on a tour of the Walled City to show how much we have done.

—DOMINADOR FERRER JR.
administrator, Intramuros
Administration, 5/F Palacio del
Gobernador cor General Luna
and Aduana Streets,
Intramuros, Manila

Why Brother Mike and the BPM should be welcomed

IT seems that everyone is jumping into the bandwagon of coalition-forming to seize the opportunity and promise of a "no politics" national landscape. This is very welcome and healthy considering that we are all stakeholders in this country's fate. The 12:30 Movement of civil society groups and the Bangon Pilipino Movement (BPM) of Mike Velarde are healthy democratic initiatives in the spirit of GMA's "no nonsense governance."

We should encourage such movements that do the contrary to what is usual. There should not be a monopoly as to who should be a catalyst for change. The BPM should be given the chance to prove its contribution. It should not be castigated for its past involvement with personalistic politics, or for having yet to formulate its platforms, or Mike Velarde's intrusion into our national state of affairs. For that would be an insult to the Edsa spirit fashioned by a collectivity from all walks of life.

The BPM is no different from any other group attempting to make our situation better. Our common goal to save our country from being the weakest link in Asia should cement us all toward its realization. And the BPM, as any other group, should be welcomed, not excluded.

—DODO RA .CAGAS,
3rd Estrada St., Digos City,
Davao del Sur

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PHILIPPINE DAILY LETTERS INQUIRER

We must elect better leaders

BEING already a senior citizen, I have lived through the administration of many presidents elected under our changing but virtually the same Constitution.

Through all these years, graft and corruption has steadily grown, involving a few thousand pesos then to the hundreds of millions now. These and other problems have consistently bugged the government. You name it, we have it. So we cannot and do not progress as a nation.

Our system of government does not really work well enough. Why? One important reason may be because our Constitution allows any Filipino of a prescribed age to become elected to any national position, regardless of a lack of the good qualifications needed for the job and in spite of bad character traits.

To become leaders of other important institutions like the Supreme Court, schools, professional organizations, etc. candidates have to have certain qualifications. Why not elective officials?

So, through a constitutional convention, not through a constituent assembly, let us change our Constitution with one which spells out desirable mandatory qualifications for all elective government officials. All appointees to the Cabinet and vital agencies like the BIR, Customs, GSIS, SSS and the constitutional bodies should be career people. Then, there can be a greater chance that we will have good managers to run our government and hopefully progress as a nation with improvement in the life of every Filipino.

—M.S. DE VILLA, M.D.,
400 NW Ipil St.,
Marikina City

Where did money for Subic volunteers go?

LETTER writer Azucena de Gracia of the Aktibong Manggagawang Boluntaryo ng Olongapo missed the point of our statement that came out last Dec. 13, 2002 when she defended Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon despite the obvious exploitation of workers that only happened during the Gordon years in Subic.

I was one of those made to "volunteer" for months on end when the transformation of Subic was just starting, so I should know. De Gracia said the volunteers "never expected or received any compensation" despite "many months of volunteerism." On both counts, she's correct. We never expected anything for our work, and we never received any money for it. Call it volunteerism or patriotism or partnership or hope, it doesn't matter. But the fact remains that there was money given out for volunteers, as could be gleaned from the SBMA records. But where did the money go?

This was the whole point of our statement last Dec. 13. We sympathize with the volunteers, for we were also there. But we cannot blindly swallow hook, line and sinker the gospel according to Gordon. The Nov. 24 advertisement for volunteers, for example, claimed credit for 70,000 jobs generated in the freeport. This cannot be so, since employment merely stood at 7,756 when Gordon left Subic in 1998. On the other hand, Felicito Payumo's figures for 2001 was only 45,742. So who's telling the truth?

Read the fine print and you would see the whole page advertisement saluting volunteers of Olongapo was not a tribute to volunteerism; it was a tribute to the politician whose photos dominated the advertisement. It was a paid advertisement claiming patent for Subic accomplishments after the fact, at the expense of volunteers and the exclusion of others who gave their fair share in the transformation of Subic.

—LOUIE KABIGTING,
president, Pang-Masang
Ugnayan sa Olongapo

SSS member deserves to be informed

I HAVE filed a complaint against my previous employer at the Social Security System for underdeclaration of my salary and failure to remit my contributions for several months. I filed my complaint last May and I haven't received a notice or whatever form of communication from the SSS regarding the status of my case.

I found out that the SSS and my former employer have already settled the case. They only paid several months of the arrears and refused to pay the months where I was on my annual paid vacation by reasoning out that I did not report for work for the company during that time. Also, they have not yet even paid the corresponding penalty.

The irony of it all is that my employer deducted from my salary my SSS contribution on those months in question. Worse, the SSS did not even have the courtesy of informing me of the said settlement and about my former employer's refusal to pay his share.

Lastly, I hope the SSS would train its personnel to observe proper decorum when dealing and answering questions from its members. The person whom I dealt with got irritated when I asked her about the procedures for collecting and enforcing the penalty against unscrupulous and delinquent members as well as whether it is the practice of the SSS to enter into a settlement with delinquent employers even if there is a complaint in the first place, without notifying the complainant.

But for my efforts to follow up the said case in the SSS, I would have no other way of knowing the outcome. I submitted additional papers to back up my claim as requested and I am hoping that the SSS will have the courtesy of informing me if it ever arrived at a settlement of my case. I think I deserve to be officially informed.

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France: Nothing justifies attack now

UNITED NATIONS—France said Monday that nothing would justify an immediate military attack on Iraq, countering British and US insistence that time is running out for Iraqi President Saddam Hussein to disarm.

"Nothing justifies cutting off inspections to enter into war and uncertainty," French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin told a news conference at the United Nations Security Council.

Speaking earlier, the minister said United Nations arms inspections in Iraq were "taking place in satisfactory conditions" and should be strengthened.

"Already we know for a fact that the Iraqi weapons of mass destruction programs have been largely blocked, even frozen," he added.

"Every day we are stronger from the information we are getting on the ground, so we must do everything possible to strengthen this process."

De Villepin spoke after chairing a top-level meeting of the UN Security Council on strengthening the fight against international terrorism.

British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw told the council that time was running out for Iraq, echoing mounting warnings from the US administration.

"There has to come a moment when our patience runs out, and we are now near to that point with Iraq," said.

After the meeting, Straw told reporters he was "unimpressed" with an offer from Iraq to cooperate more with UN weapons inspectors.

Iraq made the offer in a 10-point joint declaration, signed with chief inspectors Hans Blix and Mohamed ElBaradei in Baghdad.

"Iraq must stop this cat and mouse game. I am unimpressed with what they have done today, finding a few more shells, offering a bit more cooperation," Straw told reporters.

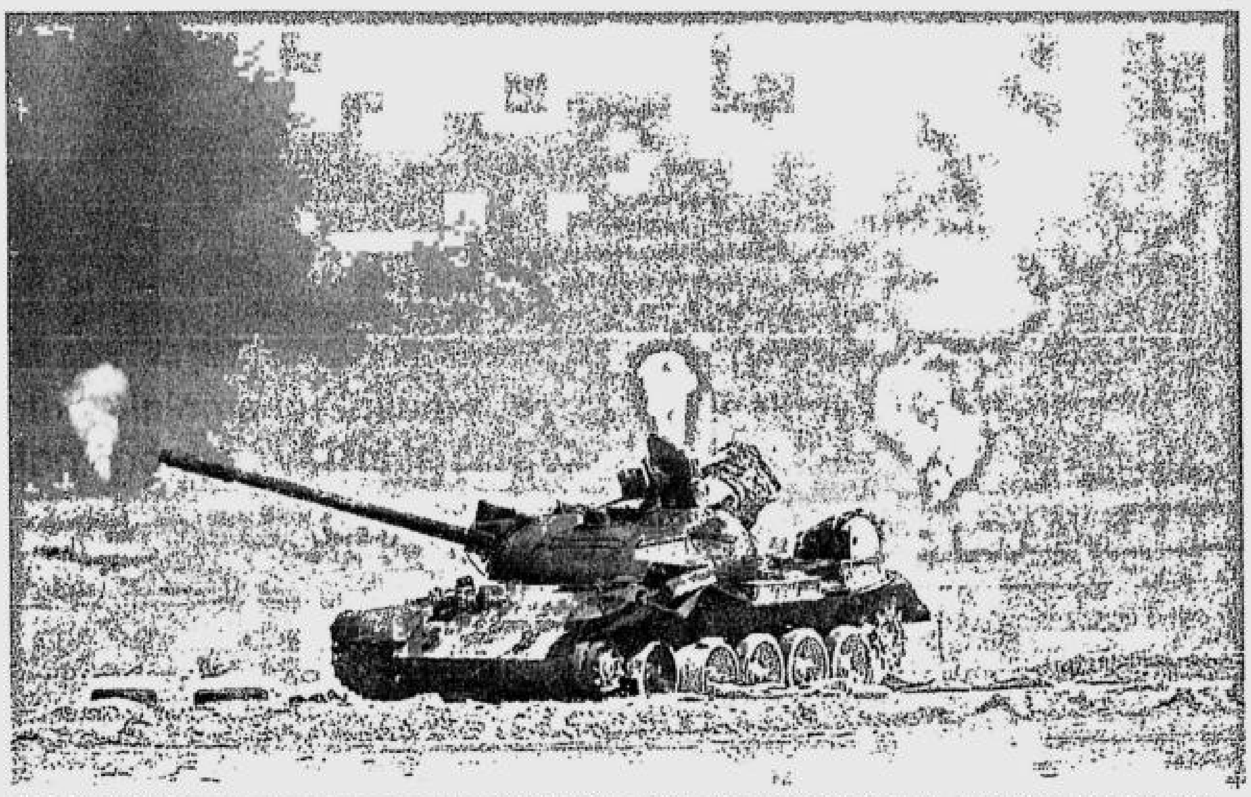
"The simple truth is, they should have been cooperating in this way from the very minute that Resolution 1441 was passed," he said, referring to the UN Security Council resolution giving Iraq a last chance to disarm.

US Secretary of State Colin Powell was similarly dismissive, describing the Iraqi offer as "just more of the same."

He added: "Iraq has an obligation to provide to the inspectors all the information that they need." But De Villepin stressed that the council "collectively made a choice for inspections" and added:

"The crisis in Iraq is something of a test, and the stakes are enormous, if only because you cannot separate Iraq from other proliferation issues. If war is the only way to resolve this problem, we are going down a dead-end."

France, Britain and the United States are among the five permanent council members, each of which has the power to veto any resolution authorizing military action against Iraq. *AFP*



A DESTROYED Iraqi tank rests near a series of oil well fires during the Gulf War, March 9, 1991, in northern Kuwait. As preparations for war intensify in the Persian Gulf, Kuwait is redoubling efforts to protect refineries and other centers of its lifeblood oil industry against an attack by neighboring Iraq. Iraqi troops looted, blew up and burned much of the country's oil infrastructure during the 1991 Gulf War. AP

Russian envoy upbeat dialogue could ease N. Korean nuke crisis

BEIJING—Russian envoy Alexander Losyukov said Tuesday there was "some optimism" that the North Korean nuclear crisis could be solved through dialogue after lengthy talks with North Korean leader Kim Jong-il.

"There were a number of talks in Pyongyang. They were useful and rather constructive," he said after arriving in Beijing from Pyongyang.

"But generally speaking, I think that there is some optimism the problem can be resolved providing the preparedness of the sides involved.

"The talks were very useful." He refused to divulge details of his six hours of talks with Kim, saying he had to report first to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

"Yes, the meeting was very interesting and very useful," was all he would say.

On Kim's response to a Russian proposal to solve the near-four month crisis, he said: "I cannot say that." The Xinhua news agency reported earlier Tuesday from Pyongyang that Losyukov held "useful, tightly-scheduled and plentiful" talks with North Korean political and military leaders during his four-day trip.

Losyukov, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister, spoke with Kim despite North Korea's insistence that the dispute can only be resolved by "face-to-face" negotiations between Washington and Pyongyang.

He told a press conference in Pyongyang that the talks helped him get a better grasp of North Korea's views on the standoff.

He said Moscow would make "good use of the information." The North Korean KCNA news agency reported Monday that Losyukov carried a letter from Putin to Kim, who "conversed with the envoy in a warm and friendly atmosphere." Losyukov reportedly said Monday that Pyongyang needed written security guarantees if it was to scrap its atomic program.

He left for Pyongyang on Saturday with a strategy to defuse the crisis after talking with Chinese leaders.

Further talks are expected Tuesday.

One of the major planks of Russia's plan is the United States guaranteeing it will not attack North Korea, as well as giving the desperately poor nation economic aid.

In return, North Korea would agree to resurrect a 1994 deal between it and the United States under which Pyongyang agreed to freeze its nuclear program. *AFP*

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Sexual exploitation of children rising, says study

BANGKOK—The sexual exploitation of children, often couched in socially acceptable practices such as child marriage, has reached alarming levels in Asia and other parts of the world, a new study by an international advocacy group suggested.

Bangkok-based advocates ECPAT (End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking) warned underaged male prostitution was on the rise in South Asia, child marriages are rampant in Asia and Africa and teenage domestic laborers in Latin America face an overwhelming threat of sexual abuse.

"We have looked into the hidden forms of commercial sexual exploitation of children which are not receiving much attention, particularly those abuses that are couched in socially acceptable practices," ECPAT International's executive director Carmen Madrinan told AFP Tuesday.

The ECPAT report based on data collected in 73 countries was released Monday in the Thai capital, focusing a glaring spotlight on practices long considered acceptable behavior in some communities.

"The incidence of commercial sexual exploitation of children is growing to enormous proportions around the world," ECPAT said in a statement accompanying the Report on the Implementation of the Agenda for Action Against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children.

According to conservative estimates, of the $20 billion generated annually by prostitution worldwide, more than five billion comes from selling children in the sex trade.

Some of ECPAT's harshest criticism was leveled at child marriages, in which "girls may be married to men who are possibly forty years their senior and are able to pay adequate dowries," the report said.

Early marriage rates were highest in sub-Saharan African nations such as Mali, Niger and Uganda and in South Asia's Nepal and Bangladesh, where roughly half of all girls aged 15-19 were married.

Madrinan noted the Himalayan kingdom of Nepal as an example, where 40 percent of girls are married by the age of 15 and seven percent by the age of 10.

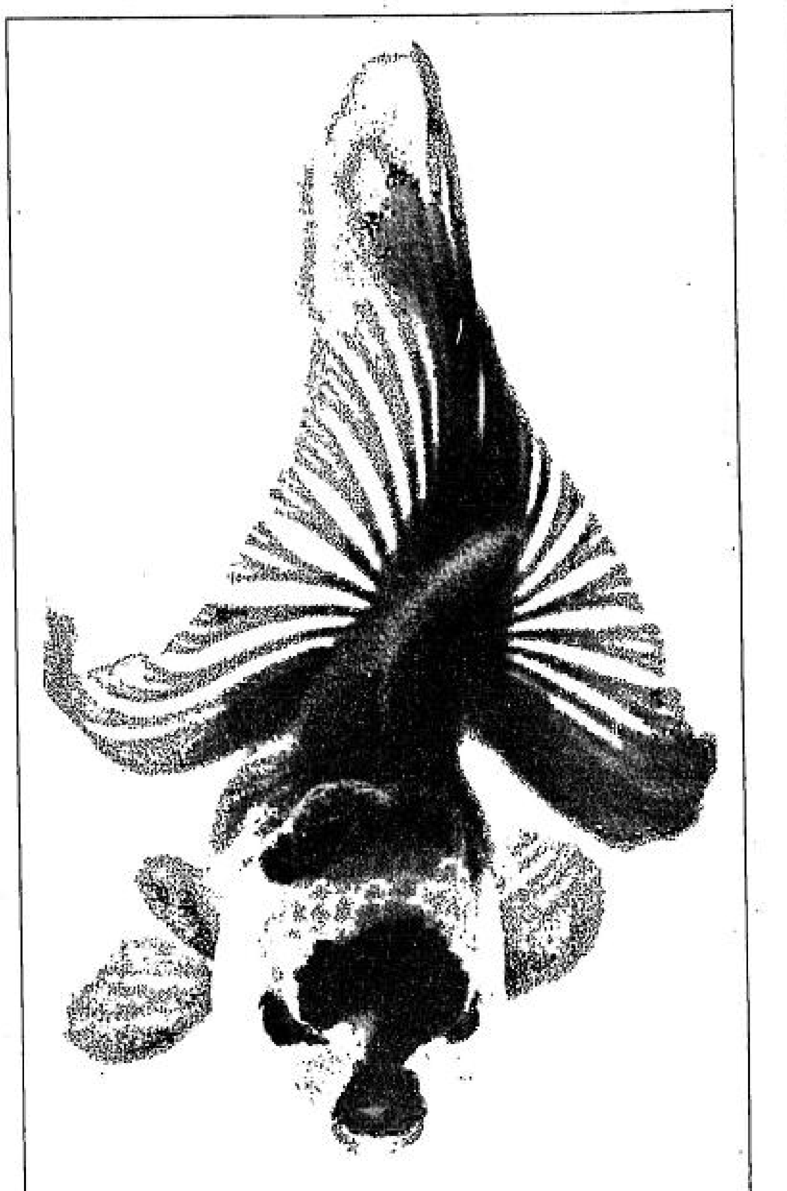
In South Asia—Pakistan in particular—prostitution involving young boys was rife, the report said.

"The practice of hiring boy victims of prostitution thrives in the communities of many provinces of Pakistan including streets, markets, bus terminals, hotels and restaurants, and in a variety of establishments," said the report.

In the country's North West Frontier Province, wealthy older men routinely hire young boys to live with them for their sexual pleasure. The practice is so common that 80 percent of regional respondents to a survey said they were aware of a member of their community engaged in such a relationship.

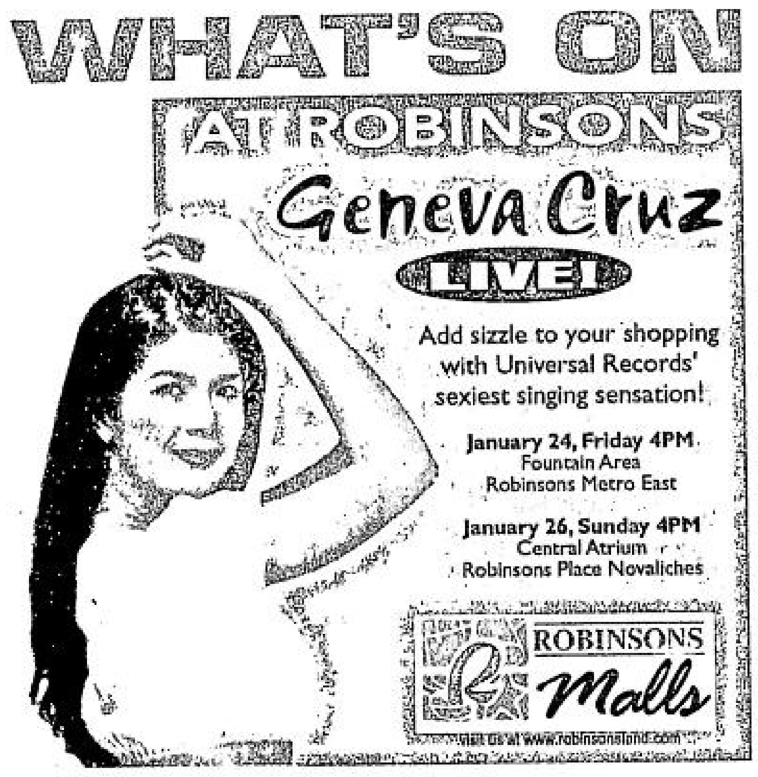
The report also noted longstanding African rituals that involve the trafficking of children, which Madrinan said leave "devastating" psychological effects on youths and their families.

Communal exploitation of children is common across Latin America, where 90 percent of all domestic servants are teenage girls who face severe threats of sexual abuse from their employers, Madrinan said. *AFP*



QUESTIONING GOLDFISH REUTERS

A goldfish with markings resembling a question mark on its face swims in a fish tank in a Taipei aquarium Jan. 20. The Chinese word for "fish" is a homonym for "surplus" and it is a symbol of bounty during traditional Lunar New Year celebrations, which fall on Feb. 1. Despite the festivities, many Taiwanese have questions about the upcoming Year of the Goat after the island's unemployment rate hit record highs in 2002.



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Ambush in Kuwait kills US civilian, wounds another

KUWAIT—Gunmen wielding automatic weapons shot dead an American working for the US military and wounded another in an ambush on their car on Tuesday near a US base in Kuwait where Washington is preparing for a possible war on Iraq.

The United States embassy condemned the incident as a terrorist attack. It said the injured man was in critical condition in hospital with multiple gunshot wounds.

The two men were attacked while driving on a highway north of Kuwait City near Camp Doha, the main US military base in Kuwait. The US embassy said they were contractors with a firm working for the US Defense Department.

Kuwaiti police said gunmen opened fire from bushes at the side of the road before escaping by car. Cartridge cases believed to be from rounds fired from a Kalashnikov rifle or rifles were found at the scene.

Reuters journalists at the scene said the dead man's body was removed from a tan-colored four-wheel-drive vehicle about two hours after the attack, which happened at around 9:15 a.m.

Dozens of police sealed off roads in the area, and Kuwait's interior minister visited the scene.

One side of the vehicle was riddled with more than 20 bullets, and the windscreen was also fractured. Some of the side windows had been shot out completely. A pool of blood was visible on the road, until police covered it with sand. *Reuters*

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Russia: Our secret agents never helped CIA on Nokor

MOSCOW—The head of Russia's external intelligence services dismissed Tuesday a US media report stating that Russian agents secretly helped the Central Intelligence Agency monitor North Korea's nuclear activities by installing radiation detection equipment.

A report in The New York Times Monday regarding "purported cooperation between the SVR (Russia's foreign intelligence) and the CIA against North Korea is false," SVR chief Boris Labusov said, as quoted by the Interfax news agency.

The US daily, citing unnamed intelligence officials, said Russian agents had placed sophisticated nuclear monitors provided by the CIA inside the Russian embassy in Pyongyang to try to detect telltale signs of activity from the North Korean nuclear weapons program.

The CIA also taught officers from the SVR how to operate the US equipment, while the Russians shared their findings with the FBI, the report said.

AFP

Bin Laden escaped by giving phone to bodyguard, says Post

WASHINGTON—Al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden escaped Afghanistan by giving his satellite phone to his Moroccan bodyguard, who served as decoy for US forces tracking the signal, The Washington Post reported Tuesday.

Abdallah Tabarak was captured at Tora Bora in eastern Afghanistan in November 2001 and sent to the US base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, where he is now a leader among fellow al-Qaida and Taliban detainees, senior Moroccan officials told the daily.

"He agreed to be captured or die," one official said. "That's the level of his fanaticism for bin Laden."

Tabarak, 43, used bin Laden's phone while moving around the cave complex at Tora Bora that was besieged by US and pro-US Afghan forces.

"It wasn't a lot of time, but it was enough. There is a saying: 'Where there is a frog, the serpent is not far away,'" said the Moroccan officials who have interviewed Tabarak and other Moroccan prisoners at Guantanamo.

Bin Laden is believed to have fled Tora Bora to neighboring Pakistan. Despite several messages attributed to him since his presumed escape, there is no definitive proof to suggest whether he is alive or dead.

A US reward of $5 million for his capture still stands.

The Moroccan officials said US forces in Afghanistan did not know who Tabarak was when they captured and sent him to Guantanamo. His mug shot, sent around the world, was immediately identified by Moroccan officials, they added.

They said they had since established his role by examining the satellite telephone he had and through interviews with other captives.

They said the ploy that allowed bin Laden to escape was widely known among the prisoners in Guantanamo.

AFP

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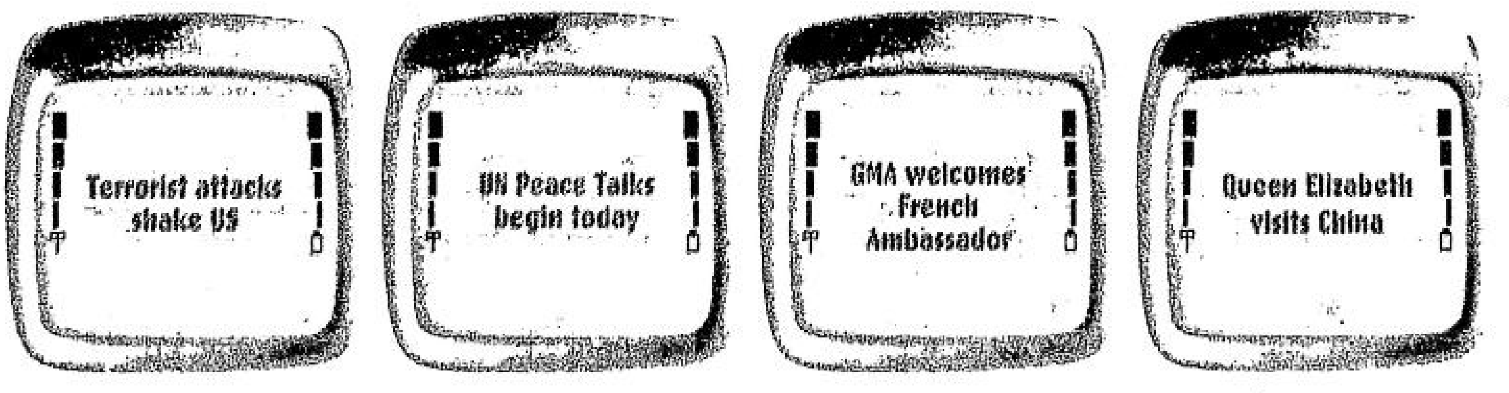
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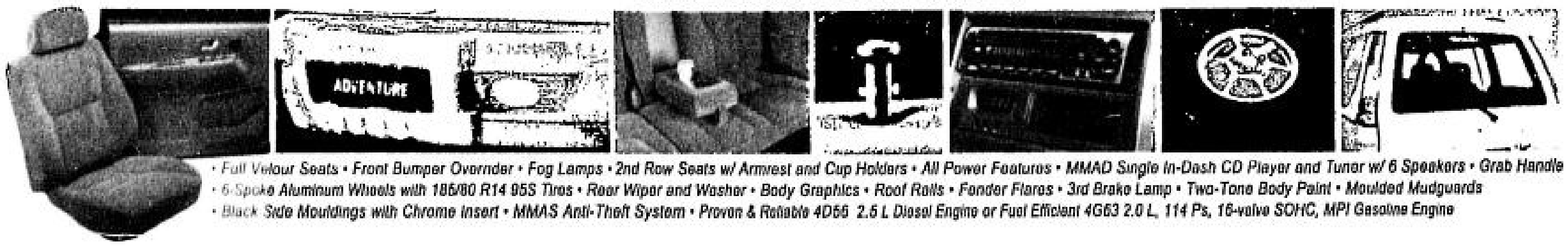

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AN APPEAL LETTER TO PRESIDENT ARROYO

Restore decency to TESDA; Relieve Liban

Her Excellency
President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo
Malacañang Palace, Manila

Dear Madam President:

In your lofty Rizal Day speech last year in which you announced your decision to forego running for the presidency in the 2004 elections, you bared a three-point reform agenda to which you pledged to devote your time to implementing them for the remaining 18 months of your term. One of these is your resolve to strengthen the economy by creating more jobs and revving up business activity, "unhampered by corruption and red tape in government."

In order to achieve this goal, together with your two other reform programs—the healing of deep divisions within the Filipino society and the conduct of clean and honest elections in 2004—you appealed to every Filipino to help in these laudable endeavors.

It is in response to your appeal, Madam President, that we are impelled to bring to your attention a very serious problem gnawing at the roots of the recruitment industry which, if left unchecked and unresolved, could severely damage the overseas employment program and inexorably lead to the further deepening of our budget deficit and the exacerbation of our faltering economy.

We refer to the spreading web of corruption at the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority or TESDA which has already alienated its rank and file employees belonging to the Samahan ng mga Malaya at Nagkakaisang Kawani, or Samaka-TESDA, and the Association of Concerned Employees Union, or TESDA ACEU, who can no longer stand the stench of corruption in the agency.

At the risk of being dismissed by the TESDA leadership, the two employees unions have already begun a signature-gathering campaign, calling for the immediate relief of TESDA Director General Dante Liban under whose watch the scams have proliferated and worsened. The leaders of these groups, who are among the signatories to this urgent appeal, are now embarking on a series of nationwide protest rallies, centering on the TESDA grounds in Taguig, to ask for an urgent change in the TESDA leadership in the hope of restoring sanity, decency and institutional integrity to the agency.

For TESDA, Madam President, reeks with graft and corruption.

We, in the recruitment industry, represented by three major groups—the Philippine Association of Recruitment Agencies Deploying Artists (PARADA), Kapisanan ng mga Tagapamahala ng mga Artista sa Tanghalan (KATAPAT), and the Organization of Professional Assessors for the Overseas Performing Artists (OPA2), together with members of the Philippine Skills Federation and testing venue owners—stand four-square behind your administration in the creation of more jobs to the extent of our government's target for the benefit of our jobless countrymen.

We commit ourselves unreservedly to supporting your goal for a more dynamic economy.

But by the same token, we cannot just sit by and permit the unbridled expansion of corruption at TESDA which has been killing our industry and surely depriving hundreds of thousands of potential overseas Filipino workers of remunerative jobs abroad and of a generous income for their families.

May we share with you, Madam President, the issues that have been wracking the corporate image of TESDA and over which we urgently seek the immediate dismissal or voluntary resignation of Director General Liban: These are:

1. The existence of irregularities in the issuance of artist record books, or ARBs, which are the main basis for the issuance of visas to Japan by Japanese immigration authorities. Blank ARBs are being issued to unscrupulous recruiters who, in turn, recruit minors and fake entertainers. This has led to the trafficking of women to work as prostitutes in Japan, which degrades the honor of Filipino womanhood in the eyes of the world.

2. Non-issuance of ARBs to OPAs who have passed the tests since 2001. This is a great disservice to thousands of our entertainers and overseas performing artists who have long qualified for overseas employment but have remained at home wasting their time. On the other hand, ARBs are sold to unqualified talents at the rate of from P25,000 to P45,000 per head.

3. Accreditation of unqualified testing venues, testing officers and testing administrators. This is grossly unfair to legitimate recruitment agencies, talent managers, testing officers, testing venue owners and OPAs.

We have time and again brought these matters to the attention of DG Liban but nothing has been done.

DG Liban should be held accountable for these irregularities under the principle of command responsibility. Considering the gravity of the problems especially as regards the assessment and certification of OPAs, concerned stakeholders have called for the immediate resignation of the TESDA chief.

Madam President, the issue of graft and corruption of TESDA should be addressed resolutely, with the removal of DG Liban and his cohorts as the price for bringing back dignity and respectability to the agency. Unless this is done, the agency scams will flourish to eventually become an albatross that will undermine your sincere efforts to rid the government of graft and corruption.

At the same time, efforts should be taken to rectify the irregularities and injustices that have burdened innocent job applicants as well as legitimate recruiters, testing officers and testing venues.

Immediate steps should be taken to clear the backlog in the issuance of ARBs. This should encompass the backlog that dates back to year 2001 and all skill assessments administered from July to December 2002.

The requirements for the registration of training programs should be adjusted to suit the needs of the entertainment industry. The vibrancy of the industry and continued deployment of OPAs who went through the previous OPA training program are proof that the entertainment industry should not be subject to the standards of TVET. Hence, the rules recently imposed by the district office of TESDA should be done away with.

Copies of the summary test results should be released to skill assessment endorsees at the end of the testing day. Testing officers should not be forced to sign blank test results as this can be easily tampered for the purpose of legitimizing the issuance of ARBs to non-testing applicants.

The appointment of test administrators for OPAs skill assessment, who are appointees of DG Liban, should be immediately revoked and organic and accountable personnel of TESDA should take their place.

The accreditation and invitation accorded to unqualified testing venues and testing officers must immediately be revoked and all forthcoming accreditation and invitation must be subject to the guidelines and procedures of the TESDA accreditation panel.

Madam President, we sincerely believe in your crusade to stamp out corruption in government. We honestly wish you success in all your endeavors to turn the economy around and reduce poverty. Your renunciation of a presidential bid is a great sacrifice that you have made to enable you to have a strong hand in governing the country, free from suspicion that the good you have been doing is politically motivated.

It is in our abiding faith in your administration that we, on behalf of the concerned employees of TESDA and in the interest of our countless clients wishing to work abroad, are addressing this urgent appeal to you for the removal of DG Liban in order to allow TESDA and its employees a breath of fresh air, save the recruitment industry from collapse, and insure the unimpeded outflow of Filipino entertainers and OPAs to waiting jobs abroad.

Thank you, Madam President.

LORENZO P. LANGOMEZ
President
Philippine Association of Recruitment Agencies Deploying Artists
(PARADA)

ALFREDO P. PALMIERY
Chairman
Philippine Association of Recruitment Agencies Deploying Artists
(PARADA)

BENJAMIN R. PEREZ
Kapisanan ng mga Tagapamahala ng mga
Artista sa Tanghalan (KATAPAT)

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Philippine Skills Development Association

ANTONIO C. HALILI
Marie's Testing Center

ART PANGILINAN
Secretary General
Philippine Association of Recruitment
Agencies Deploying Artists (PARADA)

HEBER BARTOLOME
Organization of Professional Assessors for
the Overseas Performing Artists (OPA2)

BESSIE CLEMENTE
KCEE Production Testing Venue

ANNIE GERON
President
Samahan ng mga Malaya at Nagkakaisang
Kawani (SAMAKA-TESDA)

ANA RIVERA
Organization of Professional Assessors for
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RICARDO CAJUCOM
Sky High Performing Artist Center

SONIA S. LIPIO
President
TESDA Association of Concerned
Employees Union (TESDA-ACEU)

SYLVIA F. NERI
SFN Testing Venue

JOSE V. BELLO
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AMA Computer University tops again nationwide SWS Survey

In the latest poll conducted by Social Weather Station, the country's most respected survey group, AMA Computer University (AMACU) ranked number one as "The Most Recommended Computer School" in the Philippines. AMA Computer University (AMACU) bested its closest competitor in the category by a significant 31%. AMA also far outranked some of the country's leading universities including University of the Philippines, Ateneo, La Salle, UST, Informatics and Mapua. Among those who ranked AMA as the number one computer school, the top four reasons they cited for recommending AMA were the following: first, it was recognized as the most popular school apart from being the first IT University in Asia. Second, it was known for it high standard of teachers and its advanced, high quality curriculum. Third, it was recognized as having the most modern, complete facilities and advanced technology. Last but not least, its successful graduates were perceived to have a much easier time finding jobs.

MOST RECOMMENDED COMPUTER SCHOOLS:RANK 1
Base: Total with rank 1 choices

		SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASS		
	RP	ABC	D	E
AMACU	47%	56%	46%	48%
STI	16	12	18	14
La Salle	3	8	3	0.4
Vargas	2	0	2	2
UP	1	4	1	0
Miriam College	1	2	1	2
Cagayan State College	1	0	1	2
Informatics	1	0	1	0.5

Other reasons cited were: affordable tuition fees for high quality education, global affiliation with IT industry giants like Microsoft, many accessible branches nationwide, and computer specialization and focus as compared to the more established schools and universities.

Socio-demographic profile of respondents

The respondent profile which is deemed as representative of the Philippine population is as follows: Almost half urban and half rural. More specifically, 44.5% urban and 55.5 % rural. Most of the respondents came from Balance Luzon and NCR with a combined total of 57.1%. 20% came from Visayas while 22.9% came from Mindanao. The gender was equally divided between male and female at exactly 50% each. In terms of age, most of the respondents were 45 years old and above at 39.7%. The second largest group were the 35-44 age range at 24.4%, 25-34 year olds comprised 22.6% while the 18-24 group made up only 13.3 %. In terms of economic class, most of the respondents came from the D socio-economic bracket at 67.6%. The E bracket comprised 23.6 % while ABC respondents came in at 8.8%.

Highlights of the survey

Based on other highlights of the survey one can conclude that there has been a dramatic increase in the number of students who would like to enroll in computer schools in NCR, especially among the ABC socio-economic class. This is deemed to be a good sign for the entire Information Technology (IT) industry.

Qualities of a good computer school

When asked to mention the qualities of a good computer school, the top three qualities were: advanced/good quality/ high standard teaching/ teachers, 41%; advanced technology/ modern/ complete facilities/ globally competitive, 23%; and easy to find a job/ successful graduates, 11%. Back in March 2000, the top three qualities were advanced/ good quality/ high standard teaching/ teachers, 32%; advanced technology/ modern/ complete facilities/ globally competitive, 32%; and affordable/ cheap, 7%.

Reasons for recommending AMACU

Among the 47% who recommended AMA as number one, the top 3 reasons for doing so were: well known/ the best/ the first/ more popular than others, 36% advanced/ good quality/ high standard teaching/ teachers, 30%; and advanced technology/ modern/ complete facilities, 22%.

The AMA Computer University Advantage

There are nine major reasons why AMACU has taken the lead over other schools and universities when it comes to IT-based learning.

1. Adherence to international university level standards, the highest academic distinction any institution can earn globally.

2. Dual Diploma Program which gives enrollees the chance to earn two diplomas upon graduation. One from the University, and another from NCC-UK for international employment. Also, all IT industry giants have partnered with AMA for their programs.

3. AMACU's pursuit of Research, Publication, and Library Development is unparalleled in the country.

4. International Recognition. Since 1981, AMA has provided Asia and the world the backbone for its IT workforce.

5. Globally trained faculty, especially in new areas of learning like BS Mechatronics which is currently being taught by Dr. Mustafa Okyaya Kaynak, UNESCO Chair in Mechatronics and Visiting Professor at AMA Computer University. Mechatronics is deemed as the next high-earning frontier in pioneering careers.

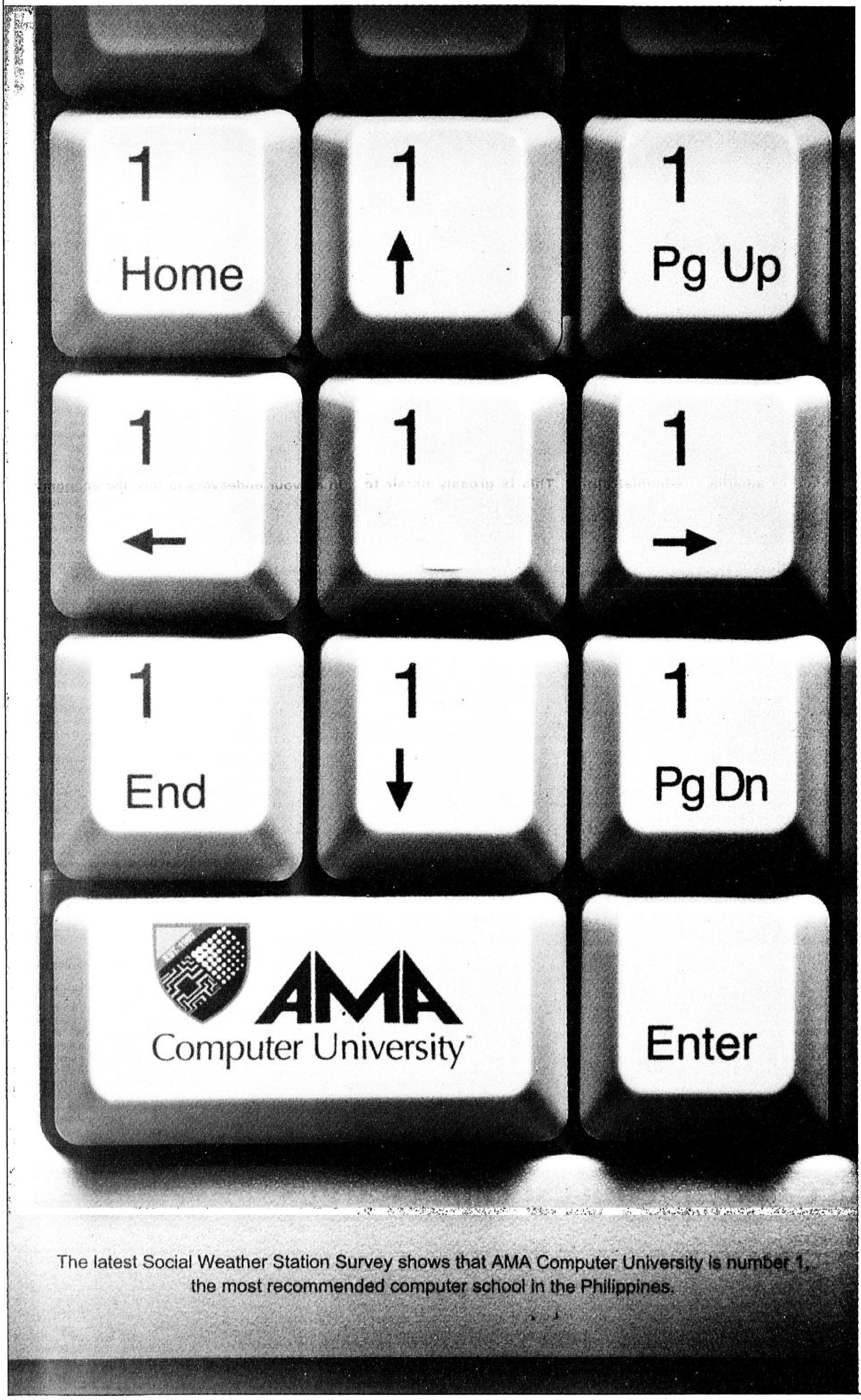
6. As a pioneer in teaching Mechatronics in the Philippines, a P500 million laboratory facility has been prepared for the hands-on use of AMA students.

7. The power of 4: AMA, Digitel, Bayantel and PT&T joined forces to provide AMAers with the fastest, widest Internet access on-demand on its Wide Area Network (WAN). Powered by AMA's 2.0 GHz computers, the Pentium 4 standard, on AMA's renowned 1:1 student-computer ratio.

8. University-level Masters and Doctorate courses. MA in Computer Education MS Computer Science, Master in Business Administration, Master in Public Administration, MBA on-line and Ph.D. in BA Major in Management, Marketing, Finance and MIS.

9. High quality but very affordable education. With the Study Now, Pay Lite scheme which gives students the option of up to 10 years to pay. And the Subsidized Tuition Fee Program wherein students are required to pay only 50% of their total fees.

With all these advantages, no wonder AMA keeps topping nationwide surveys as The Number One Computer School in the Country.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B'laan folk reject mining royalty

By Aquiles Z. Zonio, *PDI Mindanao Bureau*

GENERAL SANTOS CITY— B'laan natives have vowed to fight, tooth and nail, to prevent a mining firm from turning their ancestral land into a virtual wasteland.

Dalina Samling, one of the tribal chieftains of Barangay Danlag here, said they would not agree to the proposed one-percent royalty fee in the gross production of Tampakan Mining Resource Corp. (TMRC).

TMRC has offered the royalty fee to B'laan natives who are holders of Certificate of Ancestral Domain Claims (CADC) given by the national government long before the company was granted rights over the area.

Samling claimed that there were about 1,000 CADC holders in the 4,000-hectare property that had been declared ancestral domain.

The area lies at the core of the 30,000-hectare exploration site where TMRC's 200-hectare open pit or "mine development area" would be established.

Samling, who is also the chair of Danlag B'laan Multi-Purpose Cooperative, said their ancestral rights should be respected by the government and be given priority over the mining rights of TMRC.

The cooperative is a holder of a Community-Based Forest Management Agreement (CBFMA) granted by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

But Environment Secretary Elisea Gozun issued a memorandum on Jan. 15 suspending the operations of all CBFMA holders throughout the country.

To assure them that their rights are respected and that the environment is being preserved and protected, Samling proposed to the government that small-scale mining operations be allowed in the area.

CADC holders, Samling said, should be given a chance before allowing "outsiders" like TMRC to exploit whatever mineral deposits are found in their ancestral land.

With the full support of the government and agencies concerned, Samling said small-scale mining would succeed without damaging the environment.

Samling expressed fears that TMRC's exploration and mining operations would not only displace indigenous residents in the area but also destroy the remaining forest areas and watershed of Sultan Kudarat, South Cotabato and Davao del Sur.

Samling snubbed the re-launching ceremony of TMRC last Friday in time for the 33rd Foundation Anniversary of Tampakan town.

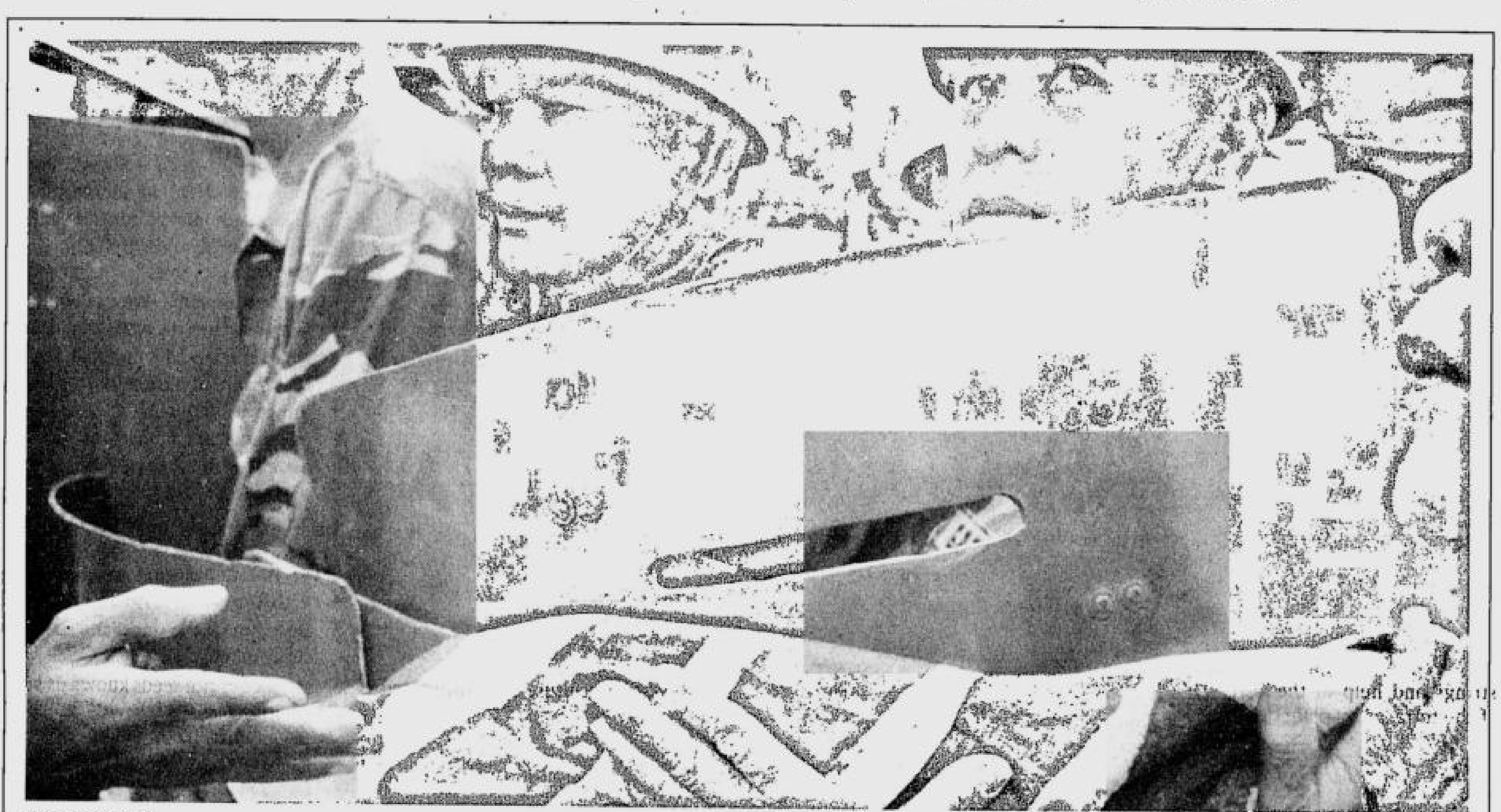
During the affair, TMRC officials distributed about P7 million in cash assistance to several tribal groups and local governments.

Representatives of religious, militant, farmer, indigenous and environment groups greeted the ceremony with protest actions.

They asked the government to scrap the 1995 mining law and cancel all existing financial technical assistance agreements (FTAAs) granted to foreign mining firms.

TMRC is expected to spend P50 million to P60 million during the exploration phase that could last from 18 months to three years.

Company officials claimed that aside from millions of revenues it would contribute to the government's coffers, the project would generate 3,000 to 4,000 jobs for the locals.



STANDOFF

DENNIS SABANGAN

Anti-riot policemen block militant farmers from the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas during a rally in front of Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City. The farmers are calling for justice to victims of militarization in Southern Tagalog on the eve of the Mendiola massacre anniversary.

Army seeks amnesty for minor rebel

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—The military is seeking amnesty for a 16-year-old New People's Army (NPA) guerrilla captured during an encounter with communist rebels in a remote village in Banga town, South Cotabato over the weekend.

Col. Alexander Yano, chief of the 601st Army Brigade, told reporters here they were set to turn over the captive to the provincial amnesty board.

The boy was reportedly serving as tax collector of the NPA's Guerrilla Front 73 operating in Banga.

He was captured during an encounter between soldiers of the Army's 27th Infantry Battalion and some 20 NPA rebels led by Ka Bontoy in Sitio Lam-asan, Barangay El Nonok in Banga last Saturday.

Yano criticized the rebels for recruiting minors to join the movement.

"The recruitment of minors as errands, collectors, much more, as warriors is a glaring violation of the Geneva Convention and the country's Anti-Child Abuse Law," Yano said.

This only shows, he said, that the rebel movement is now facing a problem in recruiting adults to join its ranks.

He said children, owing to their innocence and idealism, could be easily duped by the "sweet-talking" NPA rebels to join the communist movement. *Aquiles Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Korean arrested for slay of compatriot

ILAGAN, Isabela—Police on Monday night arrested a 38-year-old Korean who was tagged as the principal suspect in the killing of a Korean businessman in Nueva Vizcaya last week.

Senior Supt. Nelson Nario, Isabela police director, said Sang Bum Sim, 38, was arrested in Barangay Marana 1st here at about 10:30 p.m.

The Nueva Vizcaya police identified Sang and two others as suspects in the murder of Jeung Ga Chun, 52, president of Philippines-Seoul Motors Corp. based in Cabanatuan City.

The decomposing body of Jeung, a used car dealer, was found below a 50-meter deep cliff in Barangay Kirang in Aritao, Nueva Vizcaya, on Jan. 15.

The body bore heavy bruises and cuts, which, police said, were caused by the impact of tree branches after he was dumped into the cliff.

Another suspect, Villamor Julian, a former policeman, was arrested in his house in Barangay Mansibang in Naguilian, Isabela. Julian claimed Sang masterminded Jeung's killing.

Police are also hunting one Apolonio Marfil, reportedly a former Army sergeant, after he disappeared following Jeung's death.

Sang is the operations manager of Jeung's Santiago City branch, while Marfil and Julian are working for the victim as office employees.

Sang, in an interview with the INQUIRER on Tuesday, said it was Julian who shot Jeung.

A witness said that before Jeung's disappearance on Jan. 12, Jeung and Sang had a fight over the way Sang was running the Santiago City branch.

Jeung had suspected that Sang had duped him of P240,000 which the former earlier gave Sang supposedly to open a new branch in Tuguegarao City.

Sang also had their cars swapped for other vehicles without Jeung's knowledge, police said, quoting a witness.

Investigation revealed that Jeung was shot three times at the back at around 6:30 p.m. on Jan. 12, while he was in his Santiago City office. *Villamor Visaya Jr., Melvin Gascon and Ben Moses Ebreo, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Cop admits shooting Antique lawmaker's car

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—Police officers did not have to look far in searching for the suspect in the shooting of the vehicle of Antique Rep. Exequiel Javier last Sunday.

One of their colleagues on Monday admitted firing his handgun at Javier's Nissan Patrol sports utility vehicle at about 8:25 p.m. along the national road of Barbaza town, north of the capital town of San Jose, Antique.

But PO1 Jupiter Gary Espartero claimed he "accidentally" fired his .38 caliber pistol when he tried to flag down the vehicle, which he mistook as a passenger jeepney," said Supt. Ranier Idio, Antique police director.

In his statement given to the Antique police, Espartero said he was riding on a bicycle on his way to the Barbaza police station when he met five of his relatives who were walking along the national highway.

Dressed only in denim shorts and shirt, he said he was holding his service pistol with his left hand while driving the bicycle.

He said he flagged down Javier's vehicle with his left hand to get a ride to the station, some five kilometers away.

He claimed he accidentally squeezed the gun's trigger, firing a single shot while flagging down the vehicle.

Vicente Pacete, Javier's liaison officer who was driving the vehicle, was not hit. But the bullet grazed the hood of the right rear tire of the congressman's blue Nissan Patrol, scraping the paint and creating a dent.

Javier was in another vehicle in Bugasong, two towns away from Barbaza, when the shooting happened.

Idio said Espartero violated the Philippine National Police rule that firearms of policemen should always be holstered.

Espartero stressed that the shooting was not intentional as he had no grudge against Pacete.

But Idio said Espartero had been disarmed and his movement had been restricted to the Barbaza police station pending further investigation. The suspect will be subjected to a paraffin test.

Man, son face multiple incest rape charges

LEGAZPI CITY—A 45-year-old man is facing multiple incest rape charges for molesting his five daughters in Barangay Cruzada this city.

Police arrested him and his 20-year-old son after rape complaints were filed against them.

Police investigation revealed that two of the victims were the man's stepdaughters while the other three were his own daughters.

Senior Supt. Francisco Uyami, city police chief, said the victims were aged 13, 11, 9, 5 and 2 years old.

The incident was uncovered after the employer of the 13-year-old victim disclosed the incidents to authorities.

In an interview with the INQUIRER, the 35-year-old mother Nena (not her real name), said she learned of the incident only early December last year as she was then working in Manila as a housemaid.

She said she was afraid to surface because she had been threatened by her husband.

"He told me and my daughters that he would kill us if we disclose it to the police," Nena said.

She also said she had suffered maltreatment from her husband even during the early years of living together, especially when he was under the influence of liquor.

Nena and her common-law husband lived together sometime in 1993 with Nena's two daughters by her first husband and the common-law husband's two sons with his first wife.

Nena added that her common-law husband's 18-year-old son, who moved to Quezon province, also molested their daughters based on the victims' accounts.

Uyami said that based on their investigation, the suspects began molesting the children six years ago.

A multiple incest rape case has been filed against the suspects before the Regional Trial Court here. The suspects are now detained at the city jail while the five victims are in the custody of the City Social Welfare and Development Office.

Three of the victims have undergone medical examinations. Police confirmed that they had suffered lacerations. The 5-year-old and 2-year-old victims would also undergo medical exams.

Police are still investigating reports that the prime suspect allegedly molested his two other daughters in Rapu-Rapu town.

Uyami said they are now tracing the whereabouts of his 18-year-old son who also allegedly raped the victims. *Joyce Mejillano, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

ROUNDUP

3 hurt in collision

SAN PEDRO, Laguna—Three members of a family were badly injured when the vehicle they were riding in collided with an Isuzu truck at the South Luzon Expressway here Sunday. Cynthia Dino of Philippine National Construction Corp. said Domingo Valero, driver of a Mitsubishi L300 van, his wife Joy and son Mariel were hurt. Dino said the driver of the speeding truck lost control of the vehicle and smashed the rear of the southbound van.

Romulo Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Suspected killer nabbed

CAMP VICENTE LIM—Police arrested last week the prime suspect in the killing of a Bureau of Internal Revenue examiner last year in San Pablo City. The suspect, Roman Caag, 40, was arrested on Tuesday last week in Quezon province. Police said Caag was identified by witnesses as the motorcycle-riding man who shot dead Graciano Balubal, 42, who was then driving his car.

Romulo Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

More tourists in Bicol

LEGAZPI CITY—Tourist arrivals in Bicol increased by 9.4 percent from April to December last year compared to the same period in 2001, according to the Department of Tourism. Maria Nini Ravanilla, DOT regional director, said her office had recorded 316,972 tourists as of November last year. More than 11,000 of them are foreigners, while 305,951 are locals.

Ronnie Lorejo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Fewer dengue cases

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—Dengue cases in this city dropped by more than 60 percent compared to the figure in recent months. Dr. Juancho Monserate of the City Health Office said September and October last year had the most number of dengue cases during the year with 144. The cases went down to 54 in November and December. However, he said, three areas were still considered high-risk. These covered portions of Barangays San Pedro, Bancaobancao and San Miguel, which are near pools of stagnant water. *Jofelle Tesorio, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Tax amnesty

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—Real property owners have a lot to thank the provincial government for granting them tax amnesty this year. The amnesty grants property owners discounts and reprieves for past accountabilities. Provincial treasurer Teofilo Palanca said the real property tax collection from delinquent real property owners increased by two percent in 2002 compared to the figure in the previous year.

Jofelle Tesorio, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

2 die in road mishap

BACOLOD CITY—A couple was killed while three persons were injured on Friday night when a speeding bus hit the tricycle that the victims were riding in. Killed were Hernani Cordero and his wife Luzviminda, both of Barangay Sum-ag, this city. The tricycle was headed for Sum-ag when it was hit by the Ceres Liner Bus bound for Kabankalan City. Barangay Cabug *tanod* Armando Barayoga, 45, who witnessed the incident, said the bus was speeding at 80 kilometers per hour when it hit the tricycle.

Carla Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau

Fisher killed in blast

CEBU CITY—A fisherman was killed while his companion was badly wounded in a dynamite explosion on Wednesday on Cabulan Island, Buenavista town, Bohol. Lino Hequilo, in his 30s, of Cabul-an, died after he was brought back to the island by responding fishermen. His companion and neighbor, Richard Cabugason suffered injuries in the legs.

Jhunnex Napallacan, PDI Visayas Bureau

Crackdown on porn CDs

OZAMIZ CITY—A city councilor has urged authorities to expand the crackdown on pirated video compact discs (VCDs) to include pornographic videos that have proliferated. Councilor Irene Luansing, chair of the city council's women and child welfare committee, said stopping the spread of pornographic VCDs required not only a crackdown on selling operations but also on the reproduction of these videos. Prompted by complaints over the radio, police on Thursday rounded up vendors of pornographic VCDs in various parts of the city.

Ryan Rosauro, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Slay suspect yields

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—One of the four suspects in the killing of a policeman on Jan. 1 has surrendered to authorities. The suspect, Tyrone Pamilacan, 24, of Barangay Bubukal, Sta. Cruz, was allegedly one of four persons who killed SPO2 Julio Sulit. Pamilacan surrendered to Ramon Gabat, Sta. Cruz chief of police, and Mayor Dennis Panganiban. The suspect, who was accompanied by his father, and three others were charged with murder on Jan. 2 before Judge Elpidio Calis of the Municipal Trial Court in Sta. Cruz. Sulit was reportedly killed while trying to pacify two groups that were fighting at a restaurant in the barangay.

Romulo Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

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Ifugaos revive traditional farming to save world famous rice terraces

By Frank Cimatu
Kiangan, Ifugao

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo posed for photographers during her birthday in April last year, planting rice in Lubao, Pampanga, and used that for her 2003 calendar.

Ifugao Gov. Teodoro Baguilat Jr. also planted rice in a terrace in Barangay Julongan, Kiangan, Ifugao, last week but he had a nobler task on hand. He was doing this to save the rice terraces and essentially the whole province as well.

"I realized that I am not good at planting this," said Baguilat, who was doing it for the first time. "It looks staged but what can I do? I have to do this to revive the terraces."

Baguilat is reviving the 12 Ifugao rice rituals that have not been performed for decades. Last week's *bolnat* ritual, which is the third in the *tunod* or the Ifugao planting season, involved the *mumbaki* or the Ifugao holy men chanting for the seedlings not to wilt and grow vigorously.

The *mumbaki* also sacrificed four native chickens that the few guests ate with the traditional Ifugao fare like yam and bitter roots. *Baya* or rice wine was served liberally.

Only those in proper attire, g-string for men and *tapis* for women, were allowed to plant in the *tumun-ak* owned by the Dulinayans at the Julongan demonstration farm.

To perform the *bolnat*, Eleno Dulnuan, 83, of Nayon village, and Pedro Diplayu, 70, of Amduntog, both from Asipulo town, were brought to Kiangan to invoke the prayers.

Manuel Dulawan, cultural consultant of the Ifugao Rice Terraces and Cultural Heritage Office, said Dulnuan and Diplayu were among the few who can still recite the bolnat prayers.

Dulawan said the prayers of the *mumbaki* ensured that no pest would come to the seeds.

Three years ago, Diplayu was among the *mumbaki* who officiated in the *patipat*, a farming ritual last performed in 1944, in Amduntog where the men of the village wearing red g-strings and the crimson leaves of the *dongla* plant, danced at the edges of the terraces to drive away the evil spirits and rats.

There are 12 rites in the *tungod*, culminating with the *ani* or the festive harvest celebration where the *mumbakol* (the highest among the *mumbaki*) recites the rice myth. The *ani* is followed by the more somber *upin* and *kahiw*.

The provincial government is sponsoring all the rice rites in the hope of gaining interest in the rice terraces.

"We call on all Ifugaos to come home for a week in January up to June to plant and harvest. It may be a loss to them economically in their work but, culturally, it is a gain to them," Baguilat said.

Planting for fee

Tourists can also join in the planting instead of just viewing the terraces. "They can wear their g-strings and help in the revival of the terraces by planting for a fee. They will be more involved that way," Baguilat said.

The Ifugao rice terraces were declared World Heritage sites in 1995, but about a fourth of them in Ifugao had been abandoned. Baguilat said many terraces, particularly in Banaue where most of the tourists go, are also eroding.

"The erosion happened only in our generation. There are many causes, but I think new technology is not always the answer. These terraces have been here for centuries, but it is only now that they are eroding," Baguilat said.

IFUGAO women eat their lunch of native rice and pork on the rice terraces in Kiangan, Ifugao as the rice planting season starts, bringing back the indigenous farming practices among the Ifugaos.

BEN MOSES EBREO

Tourism is bringing in money, but tourism has harmed more than helped the terraces.

In Banaue, for example, woodcarving has destroyed the trees that served as watershed for the terraces. Many of the young men have also opted to be tourist guides rather than farmers.

The day before the *bolnat*, Baguilat had a meeting with United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco) representatives regarding ways on how to save the terraces.

"We have no mines, industrial zones and resorts. What have made Ifugao renowned are the rice terraces. Rice is our culture and our identity rests on them," he said.

The National Commission on Culture and the Arts granted Ifugao P200 million for four years starting last month to restore and preserve the rice terraces and the culture surrounding them.

The Unesco wanted foreign experts and consultants to look into the erosion of the terraces.

"The state of physical erosion is the tangible effect. But more significant is the erosion of the social, political, cultural and environmental values that built the terraces," Baguilat said.

He said the Department of Agriculture had introduced new varieties of rice which disrupted the rice rites and weakened the solidarity of communities. He said Western religion had declared the rites to be idolatrous and slowly marginalized the *mumbaki*.

Dulawan established the Ifugao School of Living Traditions last year for the residents to learn lost art like *baya* making, *gangsa* playing, *hudhud* chanting for women, and *baltung* chanting for men.

The *hudhud*, which was estimated to have originated in the 7th century, is recited and chanted during the sowing and harvesting of rice, funeral wakes and other rituals. It takes three to four days to recite the whole 40 or so chapters of the *hudhud*.

The Unesco cited the *hudhud* in 2001 among the 19 oral and intangible heritages of the world.

But Baguilat said the school was attracting only the elders in the villages. "We want the young ones to continue the heritage," he said.

Rice rites

The Ifugao calendar of the 12 Ifugao rice rites started last December and is expected to end in June or July. Last month, the *lukya*, *hipngat* and *panal* rites were performed.

The *lukya*, which means opening, marked the start of the tung-od or the planting season of the Ifugaos. It was the first time that bundles of rice were taken out of the granaries and the *mumbaki* called on ancestral spirits to bless the rice so that even a small amount of the rice would be enough to fill the bellies.

The *hipngat*, which followed the cleaning of the terraces, was then performed to ensure that the rice in the granaries would not be destroyed.

In the *panal*, the seeds were prayed upon to all grow to maturity. After a day of idleness, the bundles of rice seeds known as *binong-o* were taken to the paddies and made to germinate.

The next ritual, the *kulpi*, is scheduled for Feb. 4 or 5 when the rice planting is over. It is performed from house to house in the village or even adjacent villages, and ends in the granary of the richest family or the *kadangyan*.

Each family contributes a chicken for the feat where the *baltung* or magical stories are performed.

Why this Benguet town can't lick its marijuana problem

By Delmar Cariño
Kapangan, Benguet

KAPANGAN town in Benguet is home to sweet cucumbers and shy but giggling red-cheeked girls. But it is unfortunately more popularly known as "marijuana country," an image that has not made residents happy.

DAYTOY TI AMIANAN

Blame it on news reports about the military's successful campaigns to eradicate marijuana (*Cannabis sativa*) in the area. The industry has grown so big that the existence of marijuana plantations has eclipsed the town's agricultural and tourism potentials.

Kapangan's farms yield the region's sweetest banana called *molado*, a red-peeled variety. It also grows *kintoman* or red rice, which is a rare kind.

In fact, the town boasts of having the only Santa Claus look-alike rock formation at Mt. Dakiwagan, which can best be viewed from Barangay Balakbak.

But even Santa Claus could hardly flash a smile because the town's coffers seem to be seen as being economically dependent on marijuana cultivation.

Neither are local officials, led by Mayor Rogelio Leon, smiling. This year, they will be facing the same problem on how to discourage farmers from cultivating the prohibited plant.

In early December, the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency in the Cordillera uprooted P10.8 million worth of marijuana plants in the town, a move that followed a long list of eradication operations already conducted.

Only a fraction

"For the record, there are only four of the town's 15 barangays that are actually engaged in marijuana planting," Leon said. "We admit that there are those who continue to plant marijuana, but please understand that only a fraction of our people are actually engaged in cultivation."

Leon named the barangays as Sagubo, Gadang, Pudong and Beleng-Belis.

In fact, he said, the plantations are found in remote sitios that can be reached only by foot and hours of travel.

A fifth-class municipality with an annual income of P17.9 million, Kapangan is home to 18,137 people. Its agricultural lands are mostly devoted to rice and vegetable production.

This year, town officials have decided to do something about the marijuana problem. They moved that a formal study be conducted to determine the reasons farmers prefer cultivating marijuana.

Leon said planting marijuana has become a way of life for the farmers.

"It's not that the farmers are really poor that they can't look for food to eat. It's just that the profit from planting marijuana is so tempting," he said.

To support his claim, the mayor cited a part of the study which said:

"Almost all of the respondents claim to be poor. They don't see themselves as lazy. They claim to have tried traditional commercial agriculture and other livelihood activities but they are always on the losing end because of high farm inputs and costs compared to the price of their goods. The high price of marijuana has encouraged them to be more diligent."

ARMY soldiers in a recent marijuana eradication drive in a hinterland plantation in Benguet.

TOOTS SOBERANO

Believing that the problem is multifaceted, Leon decided to call the attention of concerned sectors.

During a media forum in September last year, Leon bared the findings of the study in an effort to solicit help from 15 government agencies.

The agencies gave their commitments to provide programs designed to win the farmers away from marijuana cultivation. But until now, none of the agencies have delivered the promises, Leon said, except for the Bureau of Women and Young Workers, which has already begun approaching the women and children of the villages engaged in marijuana cultivation.

Since the forum, town officials have visited the sitios planted with marijuana and personally asked the people what they wanted and how the problem can be stopped.

The people said they wanted farm-to-market roads, Leon said. But the mayor said the town's resources could not afford the huge infrastructure cost.

With the issue of imported vegetables still unsolved, Leon is all the more worried that his townmates will not at all give up marijuana.

"We are doing all we can to solve this problem. We have advised the police to be alert on any marijuana transport and to arrest and charge the culprits," he said.

He knows the task is difficult, judging from how a Grade 5 pupil responded to his advice to tell his parents to stop planting marijuana: "*Akayo a tan baknang kayo gayam* (You can say that because you are rich)."

'It offers fast and big money'

A RECENTLY completed study on the cultivation of marijuana in Kapangan showed that:

- While poverty was raised as the main reason for planting marijuana, marijuana actually attracts a lot of farmers because it offers fast and big money.
- Marijuana is easy to plant since its cultivation does not require too much labor and capital.
- Marijuana harvest is easy to sell since there are no middlemen involved in the trade. The buyers themselves are the ones who approach the cultivators.
- Although they know that planting marijuana is illegal, the farmers believe that it is better than gambling or stealing.
- The high cost of farm inputs and lack of farm-to-market roads have made marijuana planting promising.

Delmar Cariño

Bobi, Nani fighting over Marcos room

From page A1

Tiglao and his staff found themselves locked out from their office by Braganza, according to an INQ7.net source.

Tiglao and Braganza first locked horns when Tiglao blocked the appointment of Braganza as press secretary.

The post was declared "vacant" after Tiglao quit as presidential spokesperson to be full-time chief of staff, paving the way for Ignacio Bunye, then press secretary, to be full-time presidential spokesperson.

"Braganza got the key (to the Marcos bedroom) because that was going to be his office as press secretary," a member of Tiglao's staff who was also locked out, said.

War of memos

"What followed was a war of memos," the source said.

As the memos flew, Braganza, who was earlier announced to assume office on Jan. 15, reset his takeover of the press office to Jan. 20.

But as of yesterday, Tiglao appeared to have "won." Still, Braganza's staff maintain their boss has to have his own office in the Palace, aside from lording it over at the all-white Arlegui House.

"The press secretary will have two offices—one in Arlegui and another one in the Palace. It is being worked out," Press Undersecretary Robert Capco said.

Final conquest

It had better be. Because Tiglao and Braganza seem bent on taking over the exclusive domain of the strongman as though it were symbolic of their final conquest of the dictatorship.

Aside from the meaning the room holds to the anti-Marcos fighters, the Marcos bedroom is worth having.

Located at the back of the Palace, the bedroom overlooks the Pasig River, is accessible from within the Palace and through a little-known but well-guarded stairway via the Kalayaan Hall, which has been converted into a museum.

Showcase of power

It is also a splendid showcase of the pomp and pageantry of power. It has a high ceiling with solid wood panels with startling grains of gold and brown. The private bath and toilet has a Jacuzzi.

It is adjacent to Imelda's bedroom which has a cavernous bathroom. Imelda's bedroom is now the office of the presidential spokesperson.

The Marcos bedroom had been the office of Noel Cabrera when he was named press secretary by President Macapagal when she assumed office in January 2001. When Cabrera quit after a year, Tiglao, who was then presidential spokesperson, took over in a concurrent capacity. When he went on a study leave for six months in Japan last year, Silvestre Afable was appointed acting secretary in Tiglao's place.

New position, no office

As chief of staff, Tiglao occupies an entirely new position in the Palace, and thus has no office space.

Tiglao's chief of staff, Carlos Rivera, denied there was a "problem" at their office.

"There is no problem. There is nothing to write about," Rivera insisted.

Tiglao appears to be feeling right at home in the Marcos bedroom, which had been converted into a private hospital with a dialysis machine where Marcos was treated for his lupus ailment.

History-minded

To Tiglao's credit, he has been scouring the Palace museum for the chairs, tables and other furnishings which were originally part of the Marcos bedroom. With history on his mind, Tiglao is trying to put the room together according to the way it was when Marcos was at the height of his power. Except, of course for the dialysis machine.

Over at Arlegui

Yesterday, Braganza was in Arlegui meeting his staff and his newly appointed press undersecretaries Ed Joaquin and Rocky Nazareno.

The press secretary is entitled to four undersecretaries but they were slashed down to two by Tiglao during his watch.

Braganza reportedly wants to restore the number to four.

A number of press undersecretary wannabes were also spotted at the American colonial house waiting for the "approval" of their appointment.

"*Marami yata kaming napangakuan ni Nani. Baka mag*-exceed *na kami sa* allotment," one wannabe told INQ7.net.

9 cardinals, 193 bishops, 320 priests …

From page A1

and the problem of poverty in the Third World.

On the eve of the international meeting, however, pro-contraceptive groups used the occasion to issue a challenge to President Macapagal-Arroyo: Do battle with the influential Catholic Church over the issue of population control.

In their press briefing yesterday, reproductive health advocates also hit the alleged "bullying tactics" of a "pro-life" delegation from the United States during the holding of the 5th Asian Pacific Population Conference last December.

Benjamin D. de Leon, chair of the Philippine NGO Council for Population Health and Welfare, said the President's decision to drop her political plans has freed her from the shackles of the Catholic Church, whose opinion matters in the elections.

"Now that we heard (President Macapagal-Arroyo) say she is not running (for President), that should be a signal for us to write her a letter, saying she should not be afraid of the Church," he said.

Ms Macapagal has consistently followed the Church's position against contraception, pushing instead for "responsible parenthood."

Connection

But De Leon said the President should see the connection between poverty and a bloated population, her personal views notwithstanding.

"She is an economist. She knows the relationship between population growth and economic progress," he told the INQUIRER.

Tomas Osias, executive director of the Commission on Population, supported the move, saying this was the only way that the country can avoid a "crisis in contraceptives" after the US Agency for International Development shall have trimmed down its contraceptive assistance to the country in 2004.

By then, he said, the burden of procuring contraceptives for those who cannot afford to buy them will rest largely on the national government, the local executives and private donors.

But Bukidnon Rep. Romeo Nereus Acosta, a co-author of the reproductive health bill, said he doubted whether the President could really bring herself to do battle with the Church on the issue of population control.

"She recognizes the issue of population control, but probably, she is not ready to make a categorical statement" toward a more aggressive population control program, he said.

During the briefing, reproductive health delegates took turns hitting the United States for changing its pro-contraceptive stance to that of a pro-life footing during the population conference, reportedly upon orders of US President George W. Bush, a conservative Republican.

The US delegates, they said, allegedly bullied, stalled and filibustered in an attempt to tailor the "draft plan of action" in the conference to one that reflects a conservative population control program.

But led partly by the Philippine delegation, delegates from the 34 countries voted down the United States and chose to adopt a proactive and aggressive population control program.

Another chopper goes down; 7 hurt

From page A1

Army's Northern Luzon Command (Nolcom), said the Huey helicopter was shuttling two batches of Army and police officials and TV personnel from Camp Aquino in Tarlac City to the site where soldiers had recovered the remains of Pastor Dakila Lopez of the Philippine Independent Church.

Lopez was reportedly abducted and killed by members of the New People's Army in May 2001.

The chopper, which was then carrying the second batch that included reporters Jiggy Manicad of GMA-7 and Paul Henson of ABS-CBN and their cameramen, slammed into Mt. Williams in Barangay Villa Floresta at 12:10 p.m., Garcia said.

He said the pilot, 1st Lt. Paul Infante, was making a third attempt to land the chopper but that strong winds caused it to spin and crash into the mountain.

Manicad later said that on the third try the pilots flew low to allow those aboard to jump out, but that a gust caused the chopper to spin and forced it down near a ravine.

Garcia said an Air Force man, later identified as S/Sgt. Robinson Escano, was badly injured in the leg.

He said Infante, 1st Lt. Melvin Banua, the co-pilot, and Maj. Vic Tomas, public information chief of the 7th Infantry Division, complained of chest pains, and that Manicad, Henson and their cameramen, Greg Gonzales and Bok de la Cruz, suffered cuts in the head, shoulders and arms. Also injured was S/Sgt Joseph Albayda.

A rescue helicopter and a utility chopper carrying Air Force paramedics ferried the injured to the V. Luna Memorial Medical Center in Quezon City.

Garcia said PAF investigators sent to the site were still determining the cause of the crash.

But he said the chopper had never been involved in an accident in all the years that it was assigned to the Nolcom. He said he took it on Saturday to fly to Pampanga, where President Macapagal-Arroyo made a visit.

The chopper's first batch of passengers was composed of Maj. Gen. Alfredo Braganza, chief of the Army's 7th Infantry Division; Col. Jovenal Narcise, commander of the 702nd Infantry Brigade; Senior Supt. Luisito Palmera, Nueva Ecija police director; and three other Army men.

Informer's tip

Narcise said a former supporter of the NPA had tipped the Army on where Pastor Lopez, missing since May 22, 2001, was buried.

He said it took soldiers two weeks to find the remains in a spot at the foot of Mt. Williams.

"It could contain more than 10 skeletal remains of people tried by the NPA's kangaroo court," Narcise said of the spot that the insurgents had allegedly been using as a "mass grave" since the 1980s.

He said the search for other victims was continuing.

Citing an intelligence report, Narcise said Lopez, then 42 and a resident of Barangay Kita-Kita in San Jose, was abducted by rebels led by Taray Agmaliw alias Ka Omeng and Ka Aldo of the NPA's Nueva Ecija party committee's Front 2.

He said the pastor was an NPA supporter and collected revolutionary taxes for the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

"He was found guilty of misrepresenting various organizations in the solicitations and collections of funds and of misappropriating the funds, altering the amounts, or not remitting these to the NPA," the Army official said. "He was subsequently sentenced to death."

Narcise said the remains were turned over yesterday to the Nueva Ecija police for forensic tests. He said the results of the tests would be used as evidence in a case of human right violations that the military and the Lopez family were preparing to file against the rebels.

The NPA provincial command has yet to confirm or deny Lopez's killing. *With reports from Norman Bordadora and Martin P. Marfil*

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Colder…

From page A1

drop to as low as 17.5 degrees Celsius in Metro Manila.

Alvin Armando, forecaster of the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration, said the cold would be felt until the end of February.

The northeasterly winds (*amihan*) from Siberia, which started to blow into the country last October, usually peak at around this time of the year.

The lowest temperature recorded at the Pagasa Science Garden in Quezon City was 17.5 degrees Celsius at 6 a.m. on Tuesday. The highest was 29.8 degrees Celsius at 1:50 p.m.

Armando said the cold would be more severely felt in eastern parts of the country.

It was in Baguio City, however, where the cold bit the fiercest on Saturday. The temperature plummeted to 8 degrees Celsius, the coldest in 10 years.

At the 9,610-feet high Mt. Pulag, the country's second highest peak, temperatures reportedly dropped to below zero, according to mountaineers.

The temperature in the mountain city is expected to range from 10 to 22 degrees Celsius in the coming weeks, according to Armando.

Gerald Lacuarta

GMA to show biz folk on VAT: Get real

From page A1

ferring the collection of this tax," he said at a news briefing.

The government is struggling to rein in its huge budget deficit, which is largely due to tax revenue shortfalls. It is hoping that the deficit in 2002 will not exceed P223 billion. With the 10-percent VAT in place, the government is targeting a budget deficit of P202 billion for this year.

Under the law, a professional with an annual income of at least P550,000 must be VAT-registered and must pay the 10-percent VAT. The government has extended by one month, or up to Feb. 28, the deadline for professionals to enlist as VAT-registered taxpayers.

Finance Secretary Isidro Camacho earlier urged entertainers and other professionals to make a sacrifice and contribute to nation-building, noting that fixed-income earners disproportionately accounted for the bulk of the taxes paid by individuals.

In 2001, fixed-income earners paid P66.3 billion of the P80.24 billion in total taxes paid by individuals. Professionals, who earn from talent and consultancy fees, paid only P620 million. The 10-percent VAT also applies to services of registered professional partnerships, talents, singers, emcees, radio and television broadcasters, choreographers and musical, radio, movie, television and stage directors.

Although the President wants entertainers slapped with the 10-percent VAT, she has been supportive of the entertainment industry, giving cash awards to quality films and appointing actor Bong Revilla to head the anti-video piracy campaign.

Economic crisis

The Network Opposed to VAT (NO VAT), an alliance of professionals, claims that the tax would just worsen the economic crisis.

"We are committed to our responsibility of contributing our talents and dutifully paying our income taxes to help uplift the nation's economic situation," NO VAT said in a statement.

"However, the additional 10-percent VAT to be imposed on us will actually burden the end consumers, as professional fees charged will be in consideration of this added expense. The burden on individual professional taxpayers will be the complicated accounting procedures, and the erosion of our diminishing earning capacity and opportunity. Moreover, it can instill the commercialization of our professions, instead of strengthen its social orientation.

The group, consisting of artists, film directors, singers, broadcasters and doctors, urged the government to look for other sources of revenues.

To protest the imposition of the 10-percent VAT, members of NO VAT joined movie stars led by Fernando Poe Jr. and Dolphy and other professionals in a rally at the Senate on Monday.

Bunye said the movie stars were wrong in holding a rally at the Senate because tax measures were initiated in the House of Representatives.

"They also don't need to come to the Palace. If they want they can go to the House of Representatives," he said.

The House of Representatives last month approved on second reading a bill calling for a two-year deferment of the imposition of the 10-percent VAT on professionals. The bill was filed by Rep. Jules Ledesma, husband of actress Assunta de Rossi.

Legarda for deferment

In the Senate, the movie stars and other professionals found a supporter in Majority Leader Loren Legarda, a former newscaster. She wants the imposition of the tax deferred.

In Senate Resolution No. 515 she filed on the day the professionals staged a rally at the Senate, Legarda said "there is a strong clamor from both the entertainment industry and other professionals to defer the implementation of the 10-percent VAT on them as mandated by law."

"There is a need to undertake a thorough investigation and further study on the effects and implications of the implementation of the VAT not only to the entertainment industry and other professionals but to the general public, as well," she said.

Legarda said that those opposing the new tax included not only actors but professionals like doctors and engineers.

"The protesters who went to the Senate said that many of the issues raised against the imposition of VAT need to be resolved because the new tax law should be made to apply fairly and equally," she said.

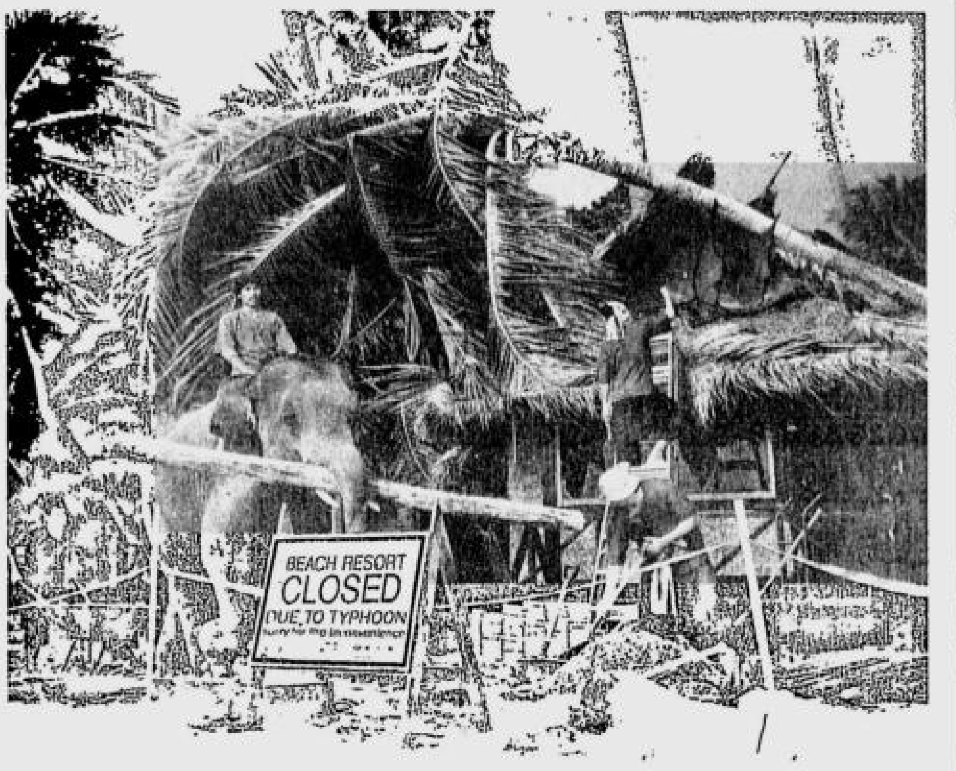
The resolution urged the Senate ways and means committee to immediately "inquire, in aid of legislation, on the implementation of the VAT."

Sen. Ralph Recto, chair of the Senate committee on ways and means, said that opponents of the new tax should come up with a viable argument to support their stand.

Recto said it was incumbent upon entertainment leaders to justify their opposition, and not wait for the Senate to do it for them.

The imposition of the new tax was mandated by Republic Act No. 7716, but was deferred until Dec. 31, 1999 by RA 8424, otherwise known as the Tax Reform Act of 1997.

However, another law—RA 8761—amended RA 8424 and extended the deferment of the imposition of the tax until Jan. 1, 2001. The law was further amended by RA 9010, which set the imposition of the new tax this month.



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Corruption raps filed vs GMA aide

MANDA

DARIO

From page A1

da's.

In a three-page charge sheet dated Jan. 21, the PAGC said Manda and the six other respondents violated at least four laws: the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act, the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees, the Build-Operate-Transfer Law and the Administrative Code of 1987.

The other respondents were Wilfredo Trinidad, former assistant transportation and now transportation undersecretary; Ofelia Bulaong, former governor of the Board of Investments and now general manager of the National Development Corp.; MIAA assistant general manager Herminia Castillo; Felipe Medalla, then director general of the National Economic Development Authority and now back at the University of the Philippines; Bingle Gutierrez, formerly with the Department of Budget and Management and now executive director of the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission; and Sylvia Clemente, deputy director of the Coordinating Council of the Philippine Assistance Program.

Erroneous approval

The PAGC charged that in 1996, Trinidad and Castillo "erroneously approved" the pre-qualification of a company that later evolved into Piatco.

It also said that in 1999, Medalla, Bulaong, Clemente and Gutierrez "approved the Amended and Restated Concession Agreement of the Naia Terminal 3 project, which contract is disadvantageous to the interests of the Philippine government."

The PAGC likewise claimed that in June 2001, Trinidad and Manda "entered into a contract with Piatco denominated as the Third Supplement of the Amended Restated Concession Agreement of the Naia Terminal 3 Project, which contract is disadvantageous to the interests of the Philippine government."

Malacañang had previously declared as null and void the BOT contract awarded to Piatco, despite a pending case at the Supreme Court.

But Manda denied any wrongdoing. "I don't see anything anomalous in what I did," he said in a phone interview.

Manda said that what he and Trinidad signed was just a supplementary document that "clarified" an earlier supplement to the Piatco contract that was signed during the Estrada administration.

Manda said the document he and Trinidad signed was later referred to Neda. Asked what Neda did to the documents, Manda replied: "That I do not know."

Manda was appointed MIAA general manager when Ms Macapagal assumed the presidency in 2001.

Administrative complaint

Rama said his commission initiated the administrative complaint, designating itself as the nominal complainant.

He emphasized that he had not received any specific instructions regarding the case against Manda and the six other respondents.

Under Executive Order No. 12 creating the PAGC, the commission has the power to initiate a case, hear the same and submit recommendations of sanctions against erring presidential appointees.

Its rulings are subject to the final approval of the President.

Rama related that the PAGC was furnished by Malacañang, the Department of Justice and the Senate with voluminous documents that led to one conclusion: the Piatco contract was null and void.

"If it was null and void, then there must be some persons responsible for the signing and execution of the contract," Rama said. "Upon review of the documents, we initiated this case."

When told that Manda was an associate of President Macapagal, Rama said: "They are just all respondents to us."

"The President never told us to spare anyone in the drive against graft and corruption," Rama said.

The PAGC gave the seven respondents until Feb. 11 to submit their sworn statements.

Long overdue?

The new political watchdog Bangon Pilipino said yesterday the President's declaration of war on corruption was "long overdue" but nonetheless welcome.

The group, composed of religious, labor and business leaders, yesterday vowed support for the President's anti-corruption measures as part of the coalition's campaign for good governance.

Donald Dee, president of the Employers Confederation of the Philippines, said that the President should look into smuggling, underpayment of taxes and other forms of economic plunder as among the primary sources of corruption in government.

The coalition would give the President the benefit of the doubt regarding her sincerity in cleansing the government, Dee said.

"We want to do away with skepticism. We will not question anybody's intent. If it is for good, then we can help them," Dee said in a phone interview yesterday.

He said the coalition would focus on anti-smuggling and anti-tax evasion measures, especially where companies are involved.

Bangon Pilipino includes the influential religious groups El Shaddai, a Catholic renewal movement, and Iglesia ni Cristo. Ecop, the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines are also among the leaders of the coalition.

TUCP spokesperson Alex Aguilar said that the coalition would hold a series of workshops this week to flesh out concrete plans to boost its advocacy for transparency, efficiency and accountability in government service.

Aguilar said the coalition was discussing with the Philippine Government Employees Association, one of the longest serving public unions in the country, how to eliminate corruption in government agencies. *With a report from Blanche S. Rivera*

Gov't now willing to talk with Piatco

From page A1

tempt arbitration, the Office of the Solicitor General has created a panel to talk with Piatco lawyers, Justice Undersecretary Manuel Teehankee said yesterday.

Teehankee, acting chair of the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel, said the OSG was now willing to talk with Piatco.

"As regards the SC directive regarding a meeting, (we are now) arranging with (the Solicitor General) and the lawyers of Piatco for a face-to-face non-binding meeting," he said in a news briefing.

Teehankee's statement was in contrast to earlier government pronouncements junking any move to resort to arbitration or renegotiation to end the Piatco controversy.

Last week, President Macapagal-Arroyo admitted that she would prefer to open Terminal 3 of the international airport by July this year.

"As announced by the President, it is still the government's intention to open it as soon as possible. This is not of course without prejudice to the ruling of the SC, which we hope will come out in the soonest possible time," Teehankee stressed.

But Teehankee pointedly used the words "meeting" and "discussion" instead of arbitration or renegotiation.

"The meeting is for purposes of exploring any alternative remedies" which, he said, was "also consistent with the spirit of the SC order encouraging" the parties to meet.

He stressed that the "meeting . . . does not mean that the government is softening in its position."

Asked about the effects of the meetings on the Piatco deal, he said: "Having a meeting does not represent or firm up any position. In fact, (a) non-binding meeting encourages both parties to be more open in the discussion."

He said that the results of the talks would be considered non-binding on both parties because of the pending petitions asking the SC to invalidate the five Piatco contracts.

"Of course, if there is a compromise agreement (it should) be submitted to the court for (final) approval," he added.

He also refused to discuss the talking points, saying "I can't, at this point, comment on the nature or content of discussions, which are still being arranged."

But Teehankee mantained that the decision to sit down with Piatco lawyers did not mean that the government had abandoned its hardline position.

JDV to endorse impeachment complaint if a congressman signs it

From page A1

extensively aired in the media and taken up by the House.

In a 22-page draft complaint, former Senators Juan Ponce Enrile and Francisco Tatad and 16 others accused Ms Macapagal of culpable violation of the Constitution, bribery, graft and corruption and betrayal of public trust, "the very same offenses for which her predecessor was impeached."

"It looks like they started their campaign very early . . . It's the opening salvo for (their) senatorial campaigns," presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said of Enrile and Tatad.

At his regular news briefing, Bunye said the impeachment complaint "has no chance to prosper" because the charges are unsubstantiated.

"Based on what we heard on radio and what we read in the papers, the complaints are rehash of old allegations that remain unsubstantiated. A number of them have been the subject of investigation by the Senate and nothing has come out of it," he said.

Cebu City Rep. Antonio Cuenco, a member of the House committee on justice, shared Bunye's assessment. While the complaint might be sufficient in form, Cuenco said it lacked substance. "The violation (cited in the impeachment complaint) should be clear, obdurate and frequent," he said.

The complainants said Ms Macapagal violated the Constitution when she allowed the release of P470 million in government funds not covered by the General Appropriations Act of 2000 for the "O ilaw ko" project.

The President was also accused of bribery and graft and corruption in the following:

- When she and her husband Mike Arroyo allegedly conspired to solicit money from Manila Rep. Mark Jimenez. The complainants used as basis Bulacan Rep. Willie B. Villarama's privileged speech in which he claimed that he received checks amounting to millions of pesos from Jimenez in 1998 and 1999 when he was still the chief of staff of Ms Macapagal, then the Vice President.
- When she allegedly asked businessman Pacifico Marcelo that she be given a 51-percent controlling interest in the Philippine Clearinghouse Inc. in exchange for signing the congressional franchise of the telecom firm.
- When she allowed the Department of Finance and the Bureau of Treasury to float P10 billion worth of 10-year bonds for the benefit of the Caucus for Development NGO Networks.

For all these alleged violations, the complainants said the President had betrayed the public trust.

Cuenco said it was possible that one to five members of the House would endorse the impeachment complaint.

But he said the House committee on justice would have to determine if the complaint was both sufficient in form and substance.

Akbayan Rep. Loretta Ann Rosales, for her part, said, the impeachment complaint was just part of the country's constitutional process.

"But they have to show evidence to be able to do it," she said.

At least 73 members of the House, one-third of the 219-member chamber, must endorse the complaint for the President to be impeached. If the complaint gets at least 73 votes, the President will be tried by the Senate.

Former Assemblyman Homobono Adaza, one of the signatories to the complaint, has asked opposition congressmen to endorse the impeachment complaint.

Minority Leader Carlos Padilla said that he and Iloilo Rep. Rolex Suplico were approached by Adaza Monday night to seek their support for the impeachment complaint that a group led by Philippine Consultative Assembly chair Linda Montayre plans to file in the House.

But Padilla said that he and other opposition legislators wanted to see a copy of the complaint first to determine whether a study group to be headed by Maguindanao Rep. Didagen Dilangalen would need to review it. *With a report from Jhunnex Napallacan, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Still full speed ahead on Cha-cha for Lakas

From page A1

light," a party leader said on condition of anonymity.

President Macapagal-Arroyo called the meeting to order a few hours after Sin, in his homily at the Mass commemorating the second anniversary of People Power II, expressed opposition to amending the Constitution. The President and De Venecia are co-chairs of Lakas.

But the source said Ms Macapagal "merely listened most of the time to the discussions."

Ignacio Bunye, the President's spokesperson and himself a party stalwart, yesterday confirmed that De Venecia was "trying to work out something quietly."

"[He] said he will initiate exploratory talks with members of the Senate regarding his proposal for a constituent assembly," Bunye said, adding that De Venecia also used the phrases "quiet diplomacy" and "quiet back-channeling" to describe his continuing effort.

"The Speaker, however, also said that party leaders in Congress should work first for the approval of the reform bills identified by the President," Bunye said.

But at the Senate, 14 senators yesterday signed a resolution calling for a constitutional convention—with delegates to be elected by the people on May 10, 2004, simultaneous with the national elections—to amend the Charter.

This is also the preference earlier expressed by Ms Macapagal.

Senate President Franklin Drilon, principal author of the three-page resolution, said he expected the number of senators supporting the initiative to reach 16—the required two-thirds vote in the chamber for such an action.

"The resolution effectively closes the door to converting Congress into a constituent assembly," Drilon said at a press conference. "It stresses the weakness of holding such an assembly, which will only serve to divide the attention and resources of government."

Apart from Drilon, those who signed the resolution were Senate President Pro Tempore Juan Flavier, Majority Leader Loren Legarda, Minority Leader Vicente Sotto III, and Senators John Osmeña, Robert Jaworski, Ramon Magsaysay Jr., Noli de Castro, Ralph Recto, Panfilo Lacson, Gregorio Honasan, Luisa Ejercito, Ramon Revilla and Francis Pangilinan.

Those expected to sign were Senators Aquilino Pimentel Jr. and Rodolfo Biazon.

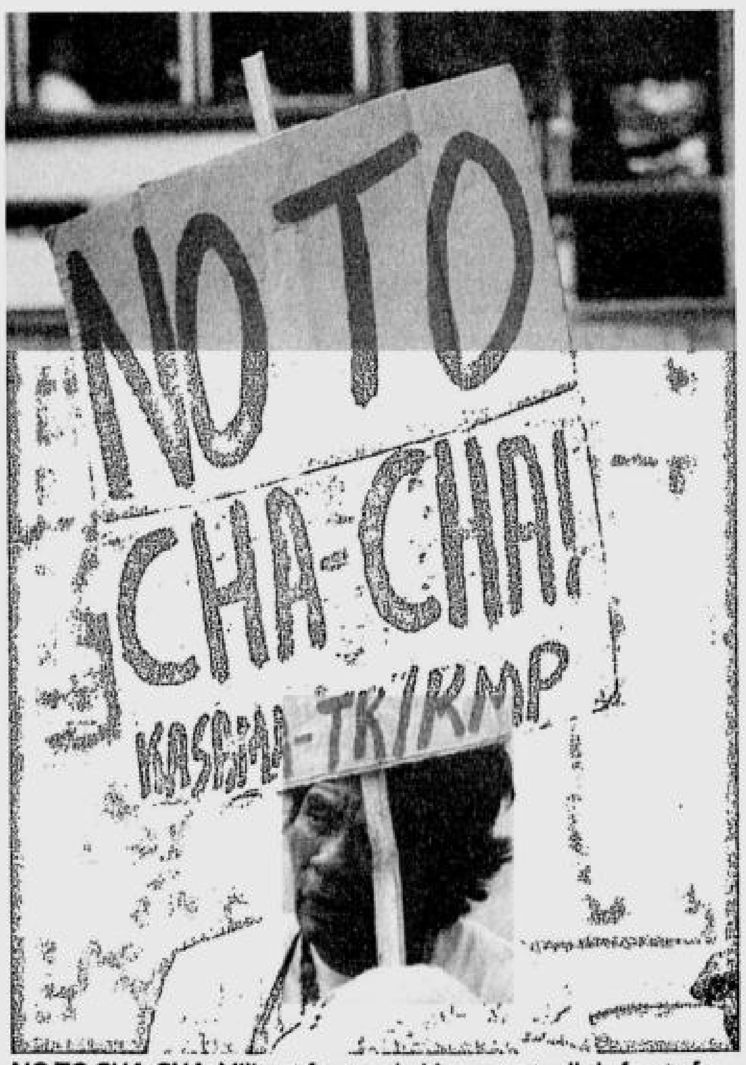
Sen. Edgardo Angara, chair of the Senate committee on constitutional amendments, revision of codes and laws, and electoral reforms, said he would not sign but would schedule the issue for public hearing as soon as the plenary referred the resolution to his committee.

Only a few

The Lakas source said most of the party leaders preferred a constituent assembly "because we need to introduce only a few amendments."

"We do not intend to rewrite or revise the entire Constitution, and the appropriate mode therefore is Congress sitting as a constituent assembly," the source said.

Asked if Charter change could still be done before the 2004 elections, the source said: "It's possible."



NO TO CHA-CHA. Militant farmers hold a protest rally in front of Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City at the eve of the Mendiola massacre anniversary.
DENNIS SABANGAN

Bunye said some party leaders were "commenting on the process"—a reference to discussions on the pros and cons of a constituent assembly or a constitutional convention.

He said that during the meeting, the President reiterated her position that a constitutional convention was the least divisive way to amend the Charter.

He also said Ms Macapagal told her party mates that the preoccupation over Charter change "might feed cynicism on the intentions of the administration."

"Let us not allow our opponents to use these discussions to drive a wedge within our party," he quoted Ms Macapagal as saying.

Vice President Teofisto Guingona, president of Lakas, and about 400 leaders comprising the party's national directorate attended the meeting. Former President Fidel Ramos, the party's chair emeritus, is out of the country.

In a prepared speech, Ms Macapagal reiterated to Lakas leaders her call for their support in the passage of reform measures in Congress.

She also called for "loyalty to our party," saying "loyalty to our party at this crucial time in our history is loyalty to the needs and aspirations of our country."

The President said there was no lack of leaders in Lakas who could be endorsed as its standard-bearer.

But she said: "Let us choose our standard-bearers at the appropriate time, perhaps at the end of this year.

"I ask you to have faith in our party, its leadership and the process by which we will not only ensure victory in 2004 but [also] assure the nation of a new presidency capable and determined to pursue the reforms needed by our people."

'Bad' timing

Senators Joker Arroyo and Manuel Villar did not sign the Drilon-sponsored resolution.

Arroyo said he did not believe in the timing of the proposed Charter change, and pointed out that the Senate had to work on on many other things.

Villar said he was rejecting discussions on Charter change in compliance with the President's call not to focus on politics and on issues that would deepen divisions.

"It is not timely. The issue will be divisive. I cannot understand why lawmakers are rushing. Charter change calls for thorough discussions and debates," he said.

Villar raised urgent issues requiring the Senate's attention, such as assistance to the families of Filipino workers in the Middle East should a war erupt there.

From his detention quarters, Joseph Estrada issued a statement saying he was in favor of Charter change "after a new set of leaders had been elected in 2004."

But recounting that he pushed for "a limited revision" of the Charter during his abbreviated term, the deposed President said the amendments should "only focus on strengthening economic provisions."

He said the exercise should "avoid political tinkering" lest it allow "many of our officials today [to] have an additional three years of tenure in office without the benefit of an election."

Estrada aired this condition in noting that the "formula" being advanced by De Venecia called for the postponement of the elections from 2004 to 2007, when members of the proposed Parliament are to be elected.

He said this scheme would give an "additional" three years to the term of Ms Macapagal who, he insisted, "was not elected President but came to power by a power grab against [me] two years ago." *With a report from Volt Contreras*

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5 USOC members resign

DENVER—The US Olympic Committee plans an independent investigation of Lloyd Ward following the resignation of five members angered by his exoneration on ethics charges. The investigation comes amid a report in the Los Angeles Times on Monday that the US Justice Department plans to send officials to the Dominican Republic to investigate a deal between the 2003 Pan American Games and a company with ties to Ward's brother. AP

AUSTRALIAN OPEN

Venus, Andre reach semis

By Phil Brown
Associated Press Writer

MELBOURNE, Australia—Venus Williams slammed down aces at almost record pace, while Andre Agassi preferred precision over power as both the women's and men's second-seeded players advanced to the Australian Open semifinals.

Venus equaled her best performance at the season-opening Grand Slam event by reaching the semis on a 6-4, 6-3 win Tuesday over seventh-ranked Daniela Hantuchova of Slovakia.

A winner of four Grand Slam titles and runner-up last year to her sister Serena Williams at the French and US Opens and Wimbledon, Venus fired six aces, including one at 201 kilometers an hour (125 mph), and won 87 percent of points played on her first serve.

Three-time Australian titlist Agassi's fastest serve was 189 kph (117 mph) in his 6-3, 6-2, 6-2 win over Frenchman Sebastien Grosjean, but he was more clinical in advancing to the last four of a Grand Slam for the 23rd time.

"I don't know if I served well, but did everyone see the 201?" Venus asked in a post-match interview. "I was surprised when I saw that speed. I got a bit distracted, so I said "Venus, focus back on the match."

She'd concentrated on accuracy over speed since producing the fastest recorded serve in women's tennis, clocking 205 kph (127 mph) at Zurich in 1998, but was thinking of changing her tactics.

Venus Williams will meet No. 5 seeded Justine Henin-Hardenne in the semifinal after the Belgian overcame Virginia Ruano Pascual 6-2, 6-2.

Henin-Hardenne, who tumbled to the court with leg cramps in a 3 1/2-hour fourth-round win here over former No. 1 Lindsay Davenport on Sunday, dropped her opening service game and trailed 0-2 before she rallied to win eight in a row and outclass the No. 63-ranked Spaniard.

"I've played a lot of close matches against Venus. I believe in my chances and I will go on court to win the match," said Henin-Hardenne, who lost to Venus Williams in the 2001 Wimbledon final.

Agassi continued his low-stress run at Melbourne Park, where he hasn't lost a match since 1999 and has dropped just one set — against Nicolas Escude in the third round — in this tournament.

He said the timing of the Australian Open, in the heat of the Australian summer, worked in his favor.

The 32-year-old American worked Grosjean around the court and upped the tempo at the decisive moments.

In the eighth game of the second set, he trailed 30-0 on Grosjean's serve. He reeled off consecutive backhand winners and forced back-to-back errors to clinch the set.

Coming off a five-set win over Felix Mantilla when he rallied from two sets down, Grosjean had played 3 1/2 hours longer across his previous matches than Agassi.

The pair had been 2-2 in tour head-to-heads, although Agassi beat Grosjean in the final of the Kooyong exhibition tournament 10 days earlier. The last two times Agassi won the Kooyong event, in 2000 and 2001, he went on to win the Australian Open.

Agassi injured his wrist losing the last Kooyong final to Pete Sampras, depriving him of a title defense.

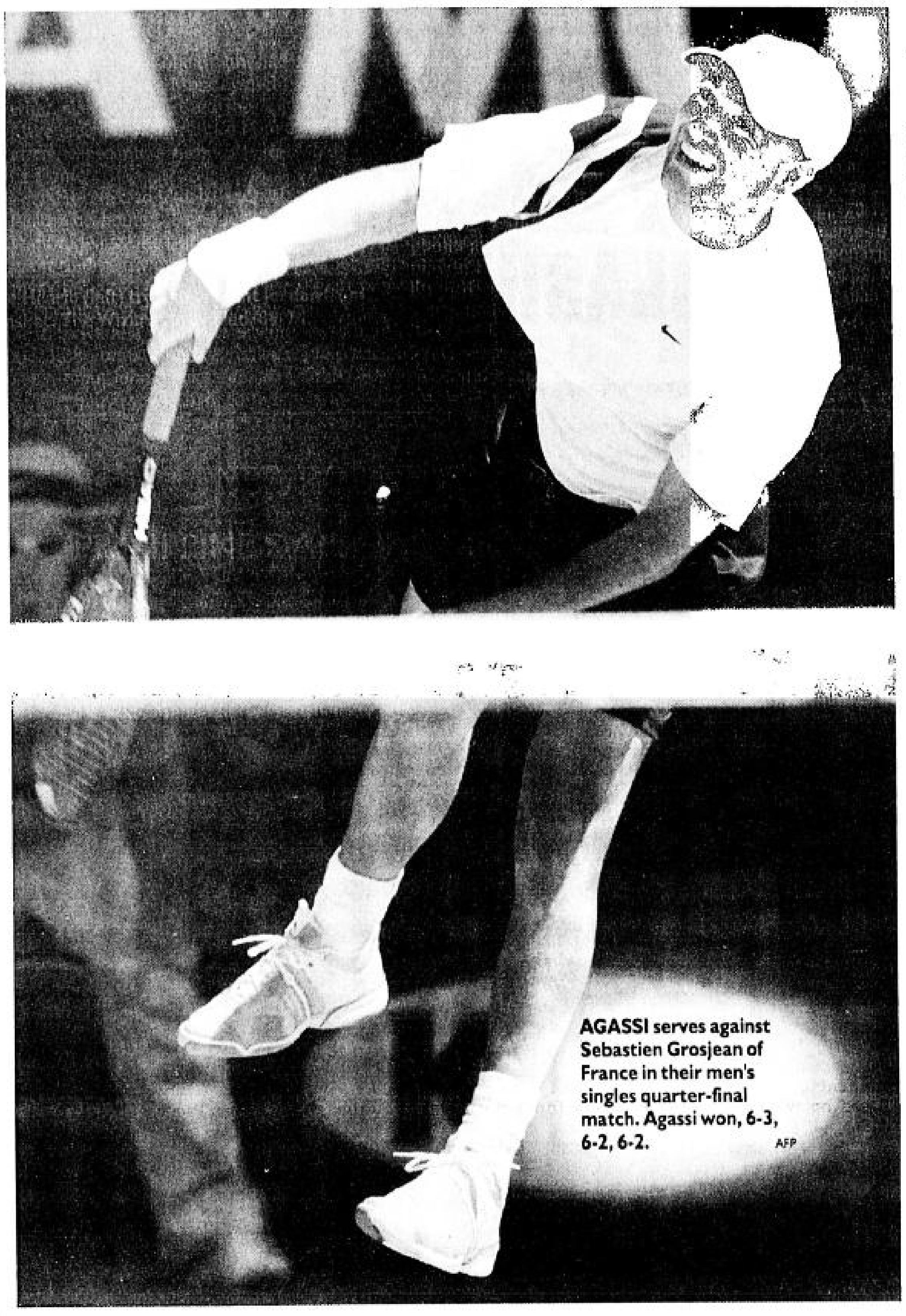
Venus Williams reached match point with a backhand crosscourt winner on the run, losing her earring in the process. She replaced the jewelry, composed herself and won it on the next point when Hantuchova sent a backhand long.

A semifinal win over Henin-Hardenne could set up another final against Serena, who is on the top half of the draw and faces Meghann Shaughnessy in a Wednesday quarterfinal. Serena is aiming for a fourth consecutive major to complete her "Serena Slam."

Hantuchova, seeded seventh, came close to beating Venus here in the third-round last year, but slipped to 0-4 against the world No. 2.

She had her chances. In the 10th game, she led 40-15 on serve and made errors on the next three points.

Hantuchova said Venus "had to play one of her best matches to beat me. That serve was incredible."


AGASSI serves against Sebastien Grosjean of France in their men's singles quarter-final match. Agassi won, 6-3, 6-2, 6-2. AFP

It's a girl for Kobe, Vanessa Bryant

LOS ANGELES—Kobe Bryant had to go back to work Monday night when the Lakers hosted the Los Angeles Clippers, barely 24 hours after he became a father for the first time.

"I'm excited to play basketball, but to be honest, I really didn't want to leave," he said. "I did not want to take my eyes off her and my wife."

Bryant's wife, Vanessa, gave birth to Natalia Diamante Bryant at 3:08 p.m. Sunday, Lakers spokesman John Black said.

The baby weighed 6 pounds, 14 ounces, (2.8 kilograms) and was 19.5 inches (49.5 centimeters) long, Black said.

"She looks just like Vanessa, thank God. She has a head full of hair just like her momma," said Bryant, who missed practice Sunday.

Bryant said the process of driving his wife to the hospital after labor pains began was "the ultimate pressure situation."

"I told Vanessa after Natalia was here it felt like I just played two back-to-back game sevens in the NBA finals, but the only thing was I didn't play," Bryant said. "I was on the bench waving the towel. She was in there playing and hitting all the big baskets."

Bryant was with his wife during the birth and cut the baby's umbilical cord. "I didn't pass out," he said.

Lakers coach Phil Jackson joked that Bryant should get some earplugs, then offered the 24-year-old some advice.

"Get up and change the baby's diaper and stay up and help the mother feed the baby at night. That's the most important thing you can do as the father," said Jackson, who has five children. AP

2 Philta tourneys slated

TMS Ships Agencies backed Philta programs by sponsoring the first two provincial junior tournaments this year.

The first will be in Angeles City (Jan.25-26, Feb. 1-2) and the section in San Pablo City (Feb.22, 23, 28 and March 2).

Players who wish to join may register at the Philta office (525-6434). Deadline of entry for the Angeles tournament is on Jan. 23 (Thursday) at 12 noon.

Hewitt willing to risk top spot

MELBOURNE, Australia—Lleyton Hewitt is willing to risk his world number one ranking in order to chase Grand Slam glory this season following his shock exit from the Australian Open.

Hewitt's dreams of becoming the first home-grown Australian Open winner in 27 years were wrecked on Monday when he was dumped out of the last 16 by Morocco's Younes El Aynaoui.

The four-set defeat has sent Hewitt back to the drawing board and the fiery 21-year-old from Adelaide is now considering cutting back his schedule in the pursuit of more Grand Slam titles.

"I think Slams are probably the most important," said Hewitt, who has been the season-ending world number one for the past two years. "Backing it up last year to be No.1 two years in a row was sort of all I wanted at the end of last year. I was able to play my best tennis towards the end of a really long and tough year.

"This year I don't think I'm going to play nearly as many tournaments as I did last year," added Hewitt, who played 76 tournament matches last season.

"Whether it hurts me, you know, trying to hold on to No.1 again, we'll have to wait and see.

"But if I get in a position of doing well in Grand Slams, you're always going to have a good chance of finishing the year No. 1 anyway."

El Aynaoui blasted his way to a 6-7 (4/7), 7-6 (7/4), 7-6 (7/5), 6-4 upset over Hewitt to reach the quarterfinals of a Grand Slam for a third time.

Hewitt now has a Davis Cup tie with Great Britain to focus early next month in Sydney. Asked if he would be even more motivated now to play in the February 7-9 Davis Cup match, Hewitt said: "I don't know. I guess it depends on who's showing up." Greg Rusedski has pulled out of the tie with an injury and Tim Henman is leaving a decision on whether he plays until closer to the event. AFP

SPORTSTV

Compiled by L. Manguiat

BASKETBALL: NBA - Sacramento vs New Jersey, 11 a.m. (r - 10 p.m.), Solar Sports
POOL: Mosconi Cup 2002, 11 a.m. (r) and 7 p.m., ESPN
Rack 'Em Up 2, 1 p.m. (r) and 9 p.m., Star Sports
World Pool Masters 2002, 8:30 p.m. (r), ESPN
TENNIS: Australian Open, 2 p.m., Solar Sports

SPORTSWATCH

Cavs coach fired

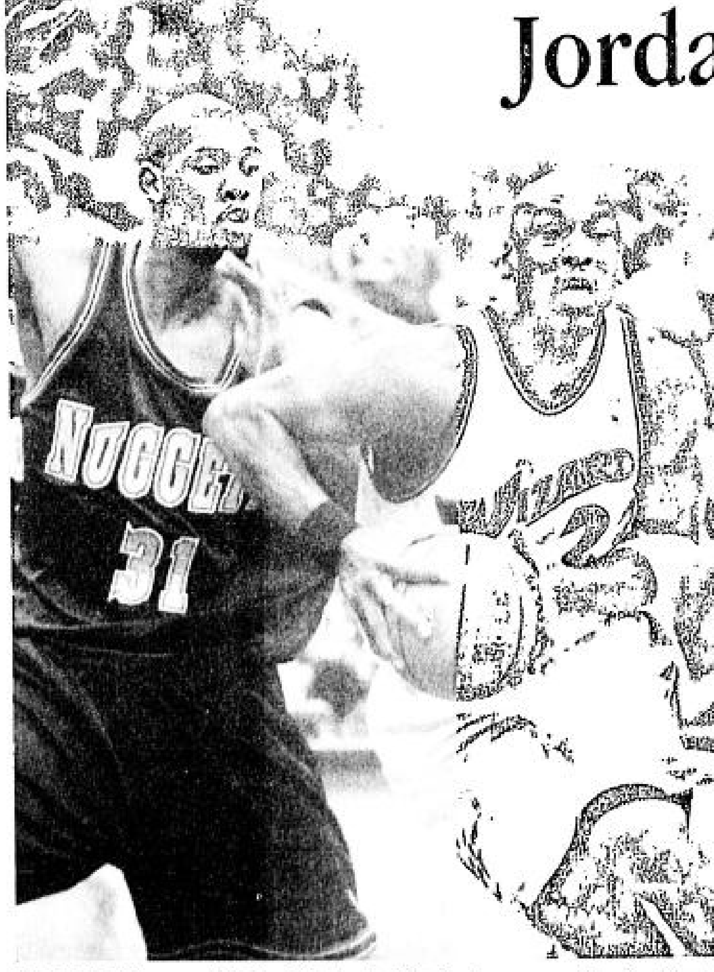
CLEVELAND—John Lucas couldn't make winners out of the Cleveland Cavaliers, so Keith Smart is getting a shot. He's made a big one before. Lucas was fired Monday by the Cavs, who at 8-34 have the NBA's worst record, an apathetic fan base, complacent players and an assortment of other problems. Lucas, who was in his second season with the Cavs and had another year remaining on a three-year, $9 million contract, was replaced by Smart. Smart, best known for making the game-winning jump shot for Indiana in the 1987 college championship game against Syracuse, inherits the league's youngest team and all of Lucas' headaches. AP

Stern backs referee

MEMPHIS, Tennessee—Commissioner David Stern defended the NBA's seven-game suspension of Portland Trail Blazers' star Rasheed Wallace, saying the league won't tolerate threats against officials. "You can't have somebody menacing an official on their way out of the building and threatening to do violence to him," Stern said Monday before the Trail Blazers game against Memphis.Wallace was suspended Saturday for a confrontation with referee Tim Donaghy on the Rose Garden loading dock in Portland after the Trail Blazers' 100-92 victory over Memphis last week. AP

Magic as endorser

NEW YORK—As competition among makers of AIDS drugs increases, GlaxoSmithKline is using perhaps America's best-known HIV carrier to spread awareness among urban blacks of treatment methods and the company's products. Magic Johnson's image is being splashed on billboards, subway posters and full-page ads in newspapers and magazines. AP



DENVER Nuggets' NeNe Hilario (left) tries to prevent Jordan from driving the lane to the basket. The Wizards prevailed, 89-74. REUTERS

NBA ROUNDUP

Jordan blitz keys Wizards win

WASHINGTON—Michael Jordan scored 10 of his 25 points in the fourth quarter to lead the Washington Wizards to an 89-74 victory over the Denver Nuggets in the NBA on Monday.

Jordan shot just 5-for-14 from the floor in the first three quarters, but made four jump shots, a driving layup and a finger role during a decisive 15-4 run. He shot 11-for-22 in the game.

While Jordan struggled, the Wizards counted on Larry Hughes for their offense. Hughes scored 20 points and sparked a 21-6 third-quarter run that helped Washington overcome a sluggish first half in which it scored just 39 points.

Juwan Howard scored 25 points for the Nuggets, who lost their third straight. Howard scored 15 first-half points against his former team.

Knicks 72, Heat 65

In New York, Latrell Sprewell outscored Miami in the first quarter and New York went on to defeat the Heat as the teams matched the NBA record for fewest combined points in a first half with 57.

Sprewell scored 14 of his 24 points in the first quarter as New York took an 18-12 lead.

Spurs 87, Rockets 82

In San Antonio, Tim Duncan scored 32 points and converted a tie-breaking 3-point play in the final minute, as the San Antonio Spurs defeated the Houston Rockets.

The Rockets erased a 13-point Spurs' lead in the fourth quarter despite star point guard Steve Francis and center Yao Ming spending the entire period on the bench. Yao played 24 minutes and had 11 points and eight rebounds.

Lakers 96, Clippers 92

In Los Angeles, Shaquille O'Neal had 32 points and 15 rebounds, and Kobe Bryant added 26 points and 11 assists as the Los Angeles Lakers beat the Clippers to claim their sixth successive home game.

Phil Jackson earned his 200th victory as Lakers coach in his 286th game, the quickest to do so in franchise history. AP

Kings vs Nets on Solar

IN what has been billed as a possible preview of the NBA Finals, the Sacramento Kings battle the New Jersey Nets live at 11 a.m. today (Jan. 22) on Solar Sports (Channel 29 on Skycable and Homecable), with a replay at 10 p.m. This will be the second and final meeting between the Kings and Nets this season.

COMPLETE RESULTS

Chicago 115, Atlanta 102; New York 72, Miami 65; Washington 89, Denver 74; Detroit 88, Indiana 78; New Orleans 114, Phoenix 102; Sacramento 102, Golden State 80; Minnesota 89, Toronto 81; San Antonio 87, Houston 82; Portland 99, Memphis 87; Boston 100, Philadelphia 99; Utah 106, New Jersey 103 (OT); LA Lakers 96, LA Clippers 92. AFP

BLAST FROM THE PAST

TODAY In 1990, Roger Antonio fired a 5-over-par 77 to post a one-stroke victory over Frankie Miñoza in the ABS-CBN Celebrity Golf Classic at the Valley course.

Magada, Cuello share FG golf lead

CAGAYAN DE ORO—Benjie Magada's putting wavered down the stretch yesterday, allowing Rodrigo Cuello to share the early lead in the First Gentleman's Professional Golf Circuit at the Pueblo de Oro course here.

Both fired three-under-par 69s, but Magada, the tour's only two-leg winner so far, could have done better.

Magada was four-under through 15 holes until he missed a three-footer for par, a birdie try from almost tap-in distance and another four-footer for par.

That shaky windup allowed Cuello, returning from a failed attempt to regain his Asian Tour card, to pull even. Despite a sore back, Cuello birdied three of the four par 5's in a bogey-free round.

Just a stroke behind at 70 was Mars Pucay, who broke into the winners' circle of the circuit bankrolled by First Gentleman Mike Arroyo and San Miguel Beer; by topping last week's seventh leg at Rancho Palos Verdes in Davao. Joining Pucay were Rey Pagunsan and rookie pro Erwin Arcillas.

Ruben Sasutil, Vic Santia and Richard Sinfuego completed the cast of under-par scorers with their 71s in the P600,000 tourney organized by the Federation of Golf Clubs Philippines, Inc.

Frankie Miñoza, playing his second straight leg in the FG Circuit after a 15th place showing at Palos Verdes, could have been among the leaders if not for his own floundering finish.

Two-under after 15 holes, Miñoza three-putted for the 16th before a double-bogey disaster got him hard on the 17th. Miñoza was joined at 73 by his younger brpther Peter, Eddie Bagtas and Cassius Casas.

MAGADA: Double-leg winner. PDI PHOTO

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Davao hosts Jr table tennis

THE BEST young paddle-wielders from Mindanao will display their wares in the 1st leg of the Regional Junior Table Tennis Circuit on Jan. 25-26 at the Victoria Plaza in Davao City.

Aside from host Davao City, teams from Iligan, Cagayan de Oro, North Cotabato and Davao Province have already confirmed their participation in the two-day event hosted by the Table Tennis Association of the Philippines (Tatap) Region 9 headed by Davao City councilor Peter Laviña and Metro Davao Table Tennis Association president Friendee Nuñez.

The host city will be bannered by Palarong Pambansa gold medalist Jacqueline Caragao and Batang Pinoy campaigner Patrick Mendiola.

TATAP president Victor Valbuena and secretary general Oscar Santelices are overseeing the tourney sponsored by LG Electronics.

Accompanying them are national mentor Lauro Crisostomo and event manager Robi Pangilinan.

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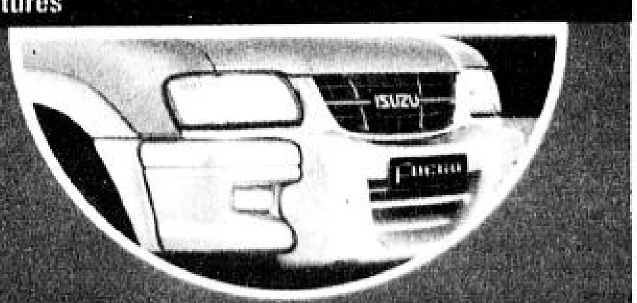

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MCC chess Feb. 22-23

THE METROPOLITAN Chess Association Amateur League reels off Feb. 22-23 at the Lotus Garden Hotel in Malate, Manila.

Open to all chess clubs and associations in private and government firms, municipalities, cities, schools and universities, the tournament is one of the four quarterly legs to be organized by Metropolitan Chess Club this year.

At stake in this nine-round Swiss System is more than P150,000 in cash prizes with the champion getting the lion's share of P50,000 plus an elegant trophy. The second placer will receive P30,000, third P20,000, fourth P15,000, fifth P10,000, sixth P7,000 and seventh to 10th finishers P5,000 each.

Top board performers will also receive cash prizes.

To be sanctioned by the National Chess Federation of the Philippines, each team can be composed of three or four players and can field in one master who will play on the top board only.

For details, call MCC at 826-8560, 09189393702 and 09168521069.

Thunderbird leads Big Dome cockfest

THE SENSATIONAL Thunderbird Firefly-Hatchet/Stingray entries of Big Dome owner Nene Araneta and his American partners Roger Roberts and Ray Alexander swept the opposition in grand style Monday night to take the lead entering today's two-cock elimination round of the 2003 World Slasher 8-Cock Derby at the jampacked Araneta Coliseum.

Displaying tremendous cutting power, agility and speed, crowd favorite Thunderbird Firefly-1 Hatchet, Thunderbird Firefly-II Stingray, Thunderbird Firefly-III Hatchet and Thunderbird Firefly-IV Stingray posted two smashing victories each to share the early lead with 14 others, among them Winslet Malaysia of 2002 Slasher champion Dicky Lim and the Malaysian Group, Renegade Roadmaster of Rene Medina and Ric de Guzman of California, Penniesaver of Pennie Fabros of Canada and MV All Star Firefly of Mario Villamor and noted breeder Boy Jiao.

A record number of 87 entries, 31 of whom are foreign participants, took part in this year's World Slasher Derby, the biggest, richest and most prestigious international event for cockfighting. It is hosted by Nene Araneta, Jun Santiago and Ito Ynares of the organizing National Cockers Association.

Meanwhile, the regular NCA 7-Cock Derby resumes on Feb. 3-5, featuring the same top qualify fighting cocks of renowned cocker-breeders. Tony Tan, Jessie Viceo, Tony Marfori, Pepito Ngo and Philip Menez will host the derby.

PBA owes GAB ₱3,336,445.53

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

WHEN I first broke out the story some years back, my initial reaction was one of disbelief: I never though that the Philippine Basketball Association, composed of the country's biggest and richest business firms with millions at their disposal, would be unable to pay its obligations to the Games and Amusements Board.

Recently, I found out that until now the PBA has not been able to settle that long-standing debt, unable even to pay in full its monthly obligations to the GAB of P660,000 representing the government agency's three percent share of income from the radio and television coverage of PBA games. As a result, the obligation has ballooned from less than P2 million in 2001 to P3,336,445.53 as of Dec. 26, 2002.

According to the official record, the PBA paid in full its monthly installment of P660,000 last March 2002, but paid much lesser amounts in succeeding months. In April, May and June, the league paid only P495,000 per month (leaving a balance of P165,000 per installment); in July and August, it paid P328,500 (balance P331,500); September, P157,166.67 (balance P502,833.33); October, P62,866.67 (balance P597,133.33); November, P125,733.34 (balance P534,266.66); and December, P115,787.79 (balance P544,212.21). The total payment to the GAB would have been P6,600,000, but the PBA paid only P3,263,554.47, leaving a balance of P3,336,445.53, said Vicente Jesus Villanueva (no relation to the GAB chair), head of the agency's pro basketball and other pro games division.

"We have given the PBA enough consideration to settle its obligations," GAB chair Eduardo Villanueva was quoted as saying, "and we hope the PBA pays the GAB soonest."

What say you, PBA Commissioner Noli Eala?

7 CRUCIAL TOURNAMENTS

Buhain bares PSC formula for success

BUHAIN

By Marc Anthony Reyes

CHAIR Eric Buhain of the Philippine Sports Commission yesterday bared the PSC's comprehensive sports development strategy for the year, culminating in the staging of the first-ever national open championships in October.

The strategy is made up of seven crucial tournaments which the agency will organize in keeping with its mandate to take charge of the grassroots development program.

"This is an extensive program which covers every age-group of athletes," said Buhain during the PSA Forum at the Holiday Inn.

The strategy begins with the Philippine National Youth Games-Batang Pinoy for kids 12 and under, Palarong Pambansa for 13 years old until fourth year high school, the tertiary Palaro for college students, and the Luzon Games, Visayas Games and Mindanao Games.

Buhain said athletes who will excel in these events will compete in the national championships which is actually the synchronized national open tournaments of all sports disciplines.

"These are the steps every athlete must take before eventually making it to the national team and the international team," said Buhain. "So every single competition is vital in the athlete's development."

Buhain also stressed the importance of holding the whole calendar every year, contrary to Philippine Olympic Committee president Celso Dayrit's observation that the Batang Pinoy and Palaro be held on alternate years.

"As an athlete myself, I know that there should be a continuity in the program, which is what sporting superpowers like China, Australia and the United States do," said Buhain. "Otherwise what would these athletes do on a year where there is no Batang Pinoy or Palaro? That (Dayrit's suggestion) is a surefire way to lose potential athletes to arts or music because there won't be anything to look forward to yearly."

NCR, Masbate prevail

NCR (National Capital Region) and Masbate displayed awesome power yesterday to crush their respective rivals at the start of the six-team all-Luzon finals in the Coke Go-for-Goal under 16 football tournament at Philsports in Pasig City.

Gerard Concio knocked in four goals and Ken Noda added three as the NCR booters, represented by Ateneo de Manila University, whipped Laguna's Pedro Guevarra National High School, 7-2.

Mark Angelo Marcaida produced an even more impressive performance in the second game, firing six markers as the Masbate National Comprehensive High School boys blanked Rizal's Gen. Licerio Geronimo Memorial HIgh School, 10-0.

Action in the tourney sponsored by Coca-Cola with Adidas as official ball continues today with two more games at the Philsports field. It will be Masbate against Baguio's Pines City National High at 7:30 a.m. and Laguna against Camarines Norte's Vinzons Pilot High at 9:30.

Ncraa: Fast team for 6-Foot League

By Roy Luarca

THE NATIONAL Capital Region Athletic Association (Ncraa) has assembled a fast, sweet-shooting lineup for the Bert Lina-Six Foot Junior Basketball Cup starting on Feb. 4.

Despite the absence of a dominant center, head coach Monel Kallos believes the Ncraa selection is capable of giving the other teams entered in the novel tournament a tough fight.

"What we have just assembled is a fast-breaking team that can shoot from anywhere," said Kallos, mentor of the Philippine School of Business Administration. "I know we can give the other five teams a run for their money."

Kallos, also a former deputy coach of the Iloilo Voltz in the defunct Metropolitan Basketball Association, will be assisted by Nomas Isla, Julius Penaranda, Al Federiso and John Kallos.

The Ncraa players are Bijahn Lara, Alaim Musní and Johmar Sabado, all of whom stand 6-foot-4; Hohann Vandrew Villaruz (6-1), Melvin Abundo (6-2), Nino Paul Oruga (6-1), Dalmacio Abella Jr. (6-2), Lionel Rivera (6-1), Christian Tan (6-2) Clark Jason Villapando (6-1) and Joseph Christopher Diaz (6-1).

Interested players can contact coach Ching Ching Marcelino at 861-4092 or Steven of FedEx at 0917-8376796.

Legaspi accepts SMB's ₱4.6-million offer

By Dennis U. Eroa

MARLON Legaspi's sleepless nights are over.

The 6-foot-5 Legaspi, San Miguel Beer's first round draft pick, finally got what he wanted from the Beermen–a contract befitting a first rounder.

A star out of Blu Detergent and former National Intercollegiate champion MLQU, Legaspi agreed to a two-year pact worth P4.6M, a marked improvement from SMB's original offer of P2.6M.

"I would like to thank SMB management for its consideration. Now I can have peace of mind," said the 24-year-old Legaspi.

Legaspi signed the deal Monday night at the SMB main office in Pasig City. Present were coach Jong Uichico and team manager Robert Non.

Arnold Calo, Legaspi's best friend, also gained a substantial increase from SMB's original offer as he agreed to a one-year pact.

Non cited the salary cap in SMB's earlier offer. Legaspi was offered P100,000 in his first year and P120,000 in the second year.

Legaspi, a two-time PBL-Cebu Basketball Federation MVP and many-time mythical five member, balked at the offer, saying his fellow first-rounders were given fat contracts.

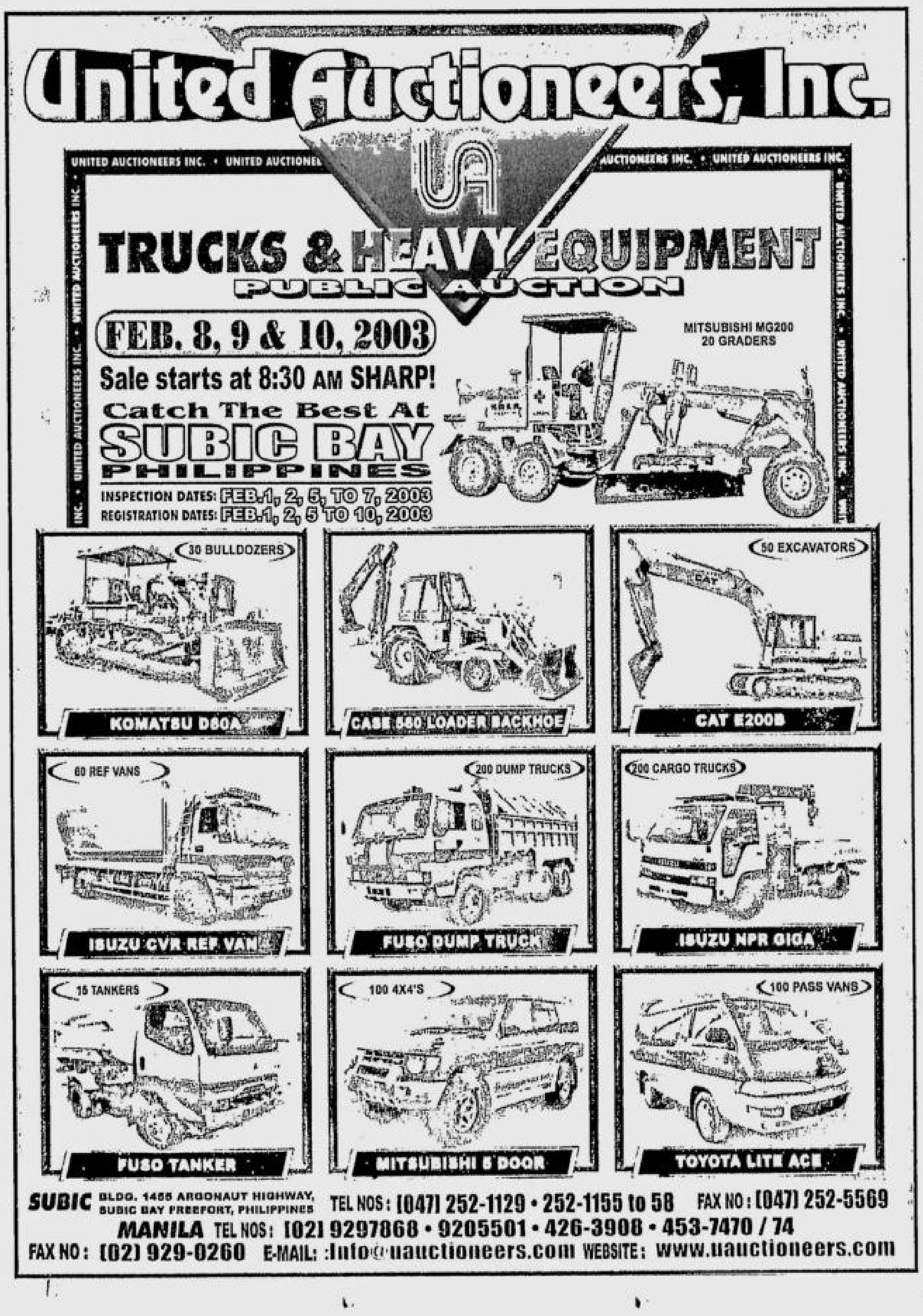
Ateneo names Purefoods man team manager

ATENEO de Manila's University president, Bienvenido F. Nebres, SJ recently announced the appointment of Simon Mossessgeld as the new team manager of the university's UAAP men's basketball team effective Jan. 1, 2003.

As team manager, he will be primarily responsible for team operations, the players' general welfare, formation and conduct; the team staff, both coaching and support staffs; coordination with the various university offices regarding the team's needs.

Mossessgeld, the former manager of Purefoods in the PBA, is also tasked with maintaining a close working relationship with the student body, faculty, administration, staff, alumni, parents and other supporters as well as handle media relations. All events involving the team and the formulation of school policies that affect the team will henceforth be coursed through him.

After 25 years of service with the Ayala Corp., occupying mostly positions in the area of Human Resources Development, Mossessgeld recently retired as associate director of Ayala Corp. and manager of Research, Training and Organizational Development of Ayala Land Inc.



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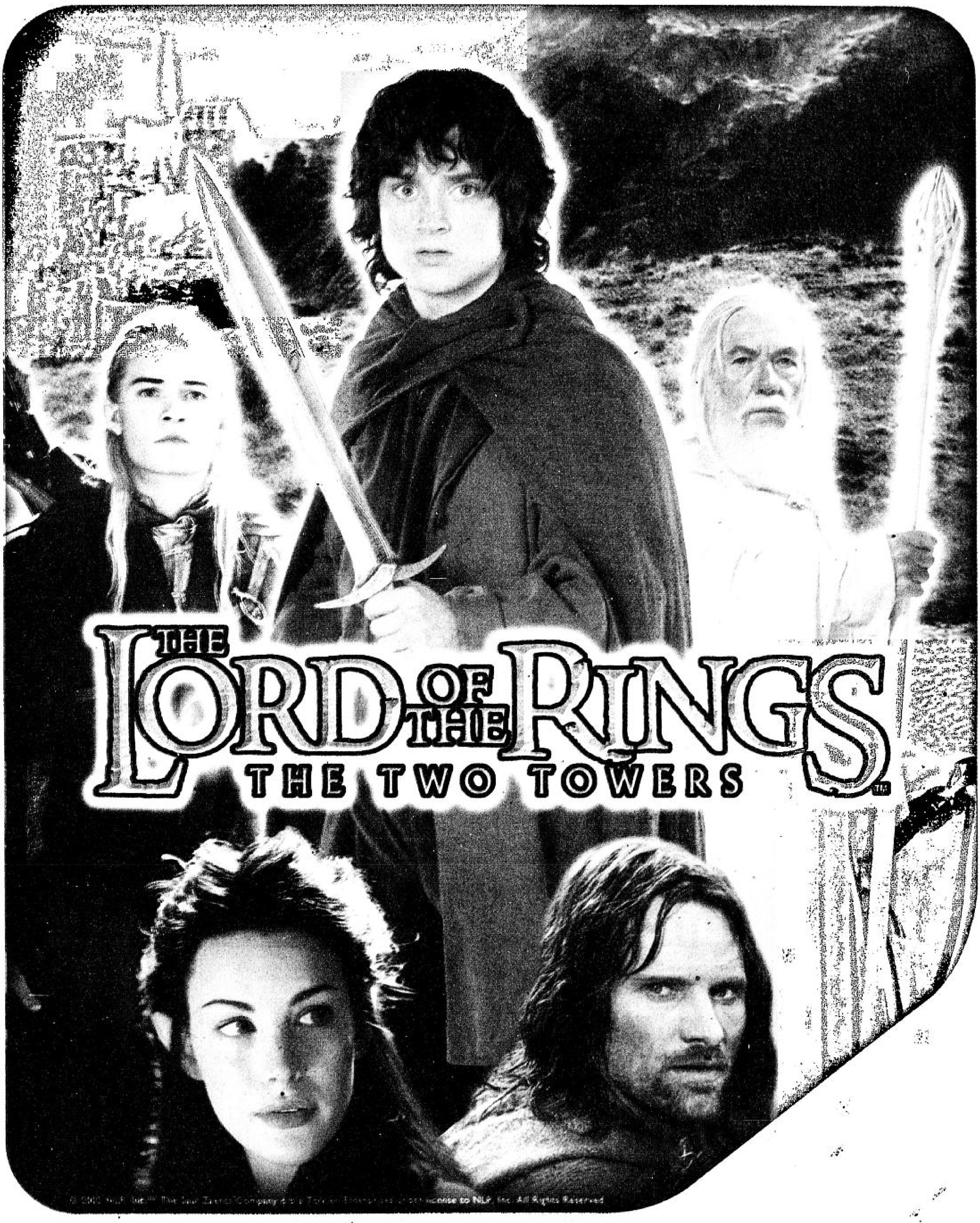
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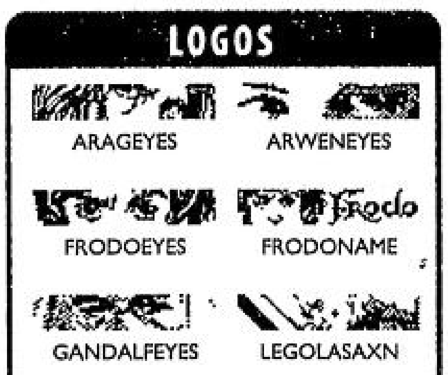

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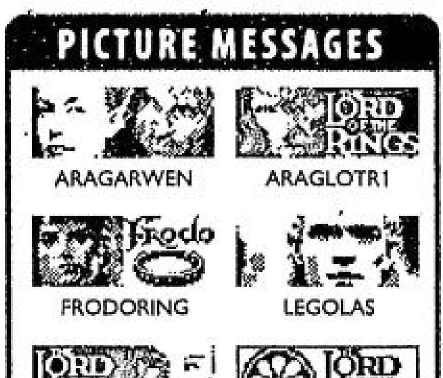

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Editor Louie C. Camino

QC extends tax deadline

THE JANUARY 20 deadline for the payment of business taxes in Quezon City has been extended to Jan. 31 through an ordinance authored by Councilor Jorge Banal, and co-introduced by all the other councilors. The extension is a response to the growing clamor of businessmen who could not beat the deadline, Banal said.

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‘So you have a gun, draw it’

By Philip C. Tubeza

IN A stirring twist, two witnesses claimed topnotch Ateneo law graduate Jose Ramon Llamas had provoked his assailant into shooting him.

“*May baril ka pala, sige bunutin mo* (So you have a gun, draw it),” Llamas allegedly dared the suspect who reacted by firing at him three times after a traffic altercation in Pasay City on Jan. 10.

The witnesses told investigators that it was Llamas who taunted alleged assailant Bashir M. Abdulrahman, sources at the National Bureau of Investigation said yesterday.

“Two witnesses heard Llamas say this. We are now trying to contact them to get a clearer picture,” one source said.

Minutes before the incident, witnesses said Llamas, on board a Toyota Corolla, bumped Abdulrahman’s Kawasaki motorcycle, damaging its signal light.

The suspect allegedly also fell off the bike.

“But right after the collision, he (Llamas) did not stop and drove away,” another source said.

The suspect got to his feet, boarded his motorcycle, and followed the victim.

Llamas got stuck in traffic and Abdulrahman confronted him.

Then the shooting happened.

While other witnesses described the gunman as relaxed and “acted like a policeman” after the shooting, a 30-year-old vendor said the suspect “looked pallid” as he walked away.

The witness, who followed the gunman, positively identified Abdulrahman as the killer.

“I’m really sure it’s him. He’s the one,” said the witness, who requested anonymity.

“I really remembered his face. I wanted to bump him (with my scooter) but my heart could not take it,” he said.

“He could have easily shot me while I followed him,” the witness added.

He said that he last saw the suspect board a tricycle near the Rizal Memorial Stadium.

LLAMAS’ slay primary suspect Bashir Abdulrahman (far left) and sketch of gunman.

ERIK ARAZAS

NBI has new ‘sure’ suspect

By Philip C. Tubeza

TRADER Cola M. Didato turned himself in and was made a state witness as the National Bureau of Investigation zeroed in yesterday on a new primary suspect in the killing of top Ateneo law graduate Jose Ramon Llamas.

NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco identified the new suspect as businessman Bashir M. Abdulrahman, 33, alias Bashir Sultan, a native of Marawi, and of 913 Arlegui St., Quiapo, Manila.

The suspect has two children , aged 3 and 11.

While witnesses had previously noted that Didato resembled the gunman, they now claim they are certain it was Abdulrahman who killed Llamas during a traffic altercation on January 10 in Pasay City.

Abdulrahman, who is at large, is also a registered owner of a 9 mm. pistol, the type of gun used in the shooting.

“This is a very good development in the case. We’ve confirmed that the (Kawasaki) motorcycle (the gunman left in the crime scene) changed hands and that Bashir bought it,” Wycoco said.

“This man likes to introduce himself as a policeman. He also has an arrest warrant (for a physical injuries case) in Palawan,” he added.

Wycoco presented to the media Didato, who surrendered with his wife Norania and their month-old son.

Didato, earlier tagged as the primary suspect, said he sold the motorcycle to a certain Ishmael Bilal on January 15, 2002.

On Sept. 2, Mubarak Batao, a brother-in-law of suspect, bought the bike from Bilal.

Batao allegedly sold the motorcycle later to Abdulrahman’s wife.

There were no records of sale in all these transactions since the Muslim traders relied on the word of their partners.

“Our primary witness is certain Bashir shot the victim. Other witnesses have also confirmed this unofficially,” Wycoco said.

One witness, a vendor, said he was sure it was Abdulrahman because Didato was shorter than the gunman he saw.

The witness saw Abdulrahman’s picture and was “positive” that he was the gunman. Abdulrahman fits his description of the gunman as “dark-skinned, chubby, 40 to 45-years-old, and 5'8" to 5'9" in height.

Regional Director Edmund Arugay, NBI-National Capital Region Unit chief, also showed Abdulrahman’s record with Camp Crame, saying that the suspect was licensed to have a Taurus 9 mm. pistol, with serial number TVA-35067.

“We are now checking if the bullet we recovered in the crime scene matched the gun,” Arugay said.

Mayor Barzaga and NBI head agent Boy Mama, Didato’s relative, helped convince Didato to surrender.

Barzaga said Didato’s brother approached him as early as Tuesday last week to make arrangements.

Didato said he did not immediately surrender because he also got frightened.

He also had to take care of his nephew, Kaysal Tahir, at the UST hospital.

“Tahir died on Sunday (January 12) and so when NBI agents came to Didato’s store, it was still closed,” Barzaga said.

“I am innocent. I just got frightened,” Didato explained.

SUSPECT Cola Didato, now a state witness.

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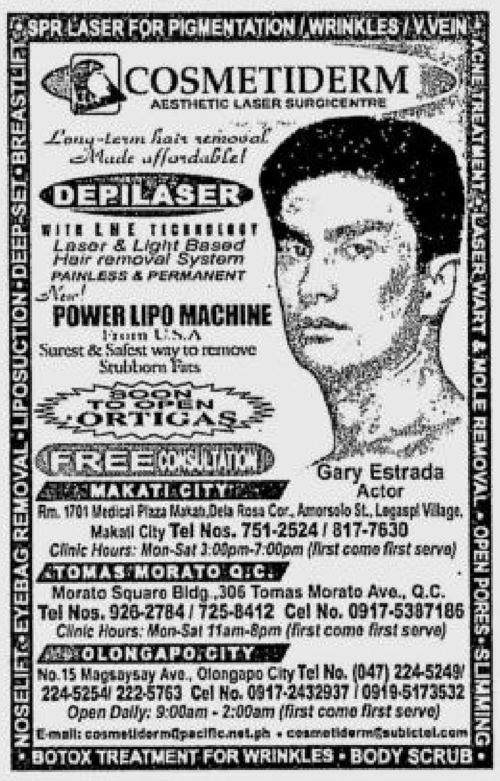
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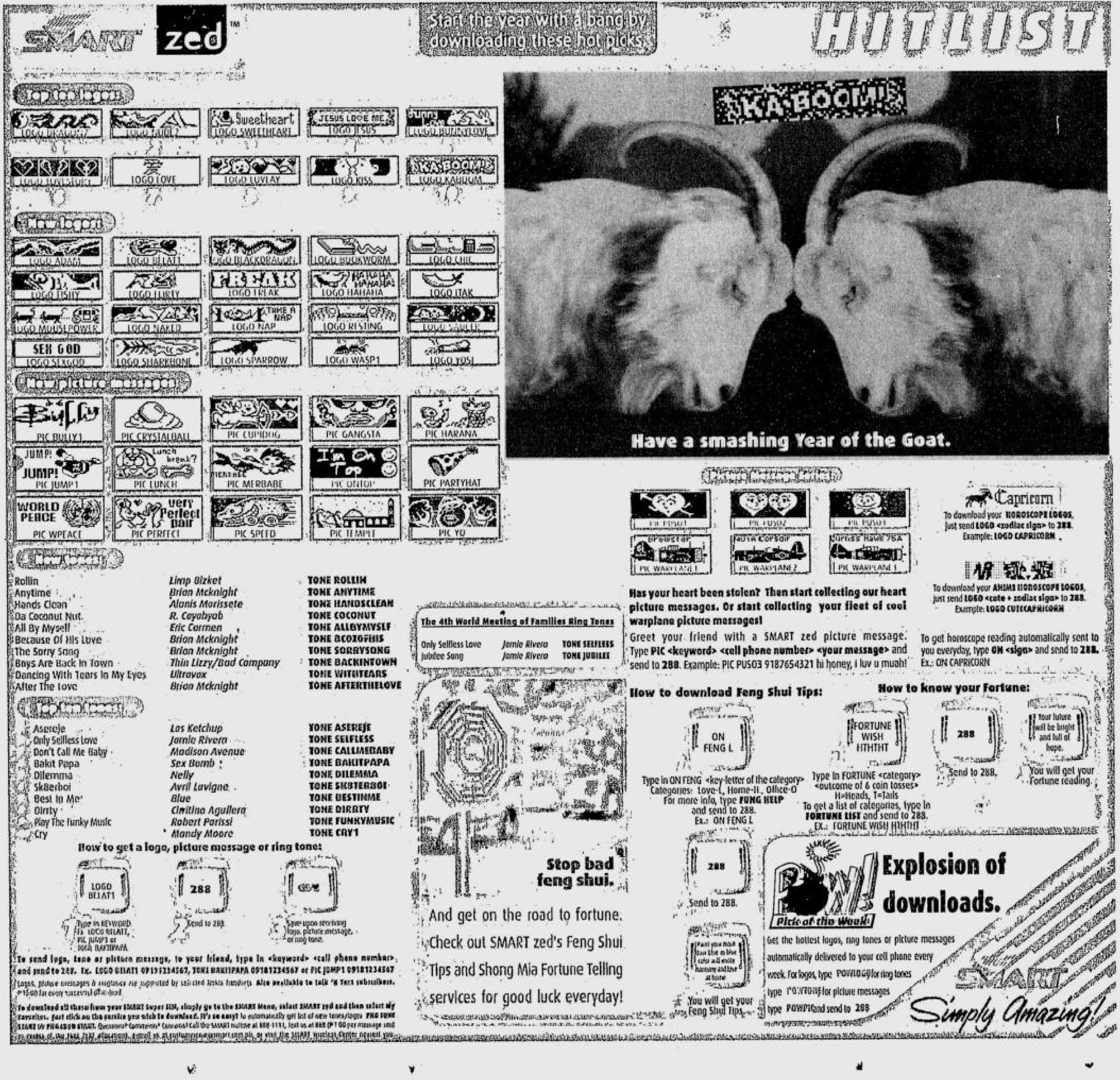
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Snatcher gets life for killing coed, 18

By Agnes Donato

FOR KILLING an 18-year-old student during a robbery two years ago, a 24-year-old man will spend the rest of his life in prison.

Armando Polilio, of Barangay Culiat in Quezon City, was sentenced to life imprisonment after he was found guilty of robbing and killing Joanisa Pudadera on Commonwealth Avenue on the evening of July 2, 2001.

In his six-page decision, Judge Jose Catral Mendoza of the QC Regional Trial Court also ordered Polilio to pay the victim's family about P180,000 in damages.

Court records showed that Pudadera, then a second year college student at the Global School of Technology, was on her way home with a classmate on board a jeepney which Polilio also boarded.

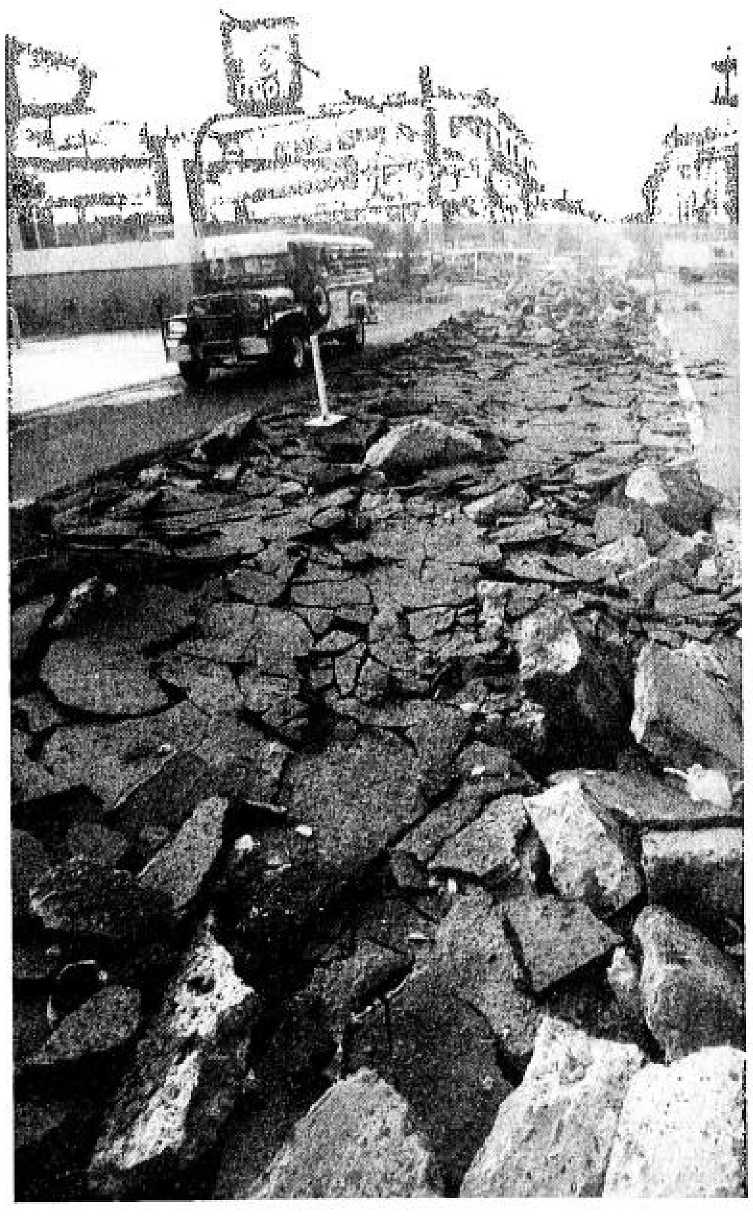
During the ride, Polilio tried to snatch Pudadera's knapsack, which contained a cell phone that was given to the student by her parents on her 18th birthday two weeks earlier.

When Pudadera resisted, Polilio pulled out a knife and stabbed her four times.

Polilio and his unidentified cohort fled after the stabbing, taking with them Pudadera's bag which also contained P2,000 and a silver bracelet worth P700.

Pudadera died at the General Malvar Hospital.

Polilio was arrested after Pudadera's classmate identified him as the culprit, records showed.



ROAD RUSH

They have finally resumed work on this stretch of road on Boni Avenue and P. Cruz Street in Mandaluyong after the INQUIRER called the attention of authorities to the diggings that had been stopped for over a month, rendering the stretch impassable. How long the repair work would take though is hard to determine.

BOY CABRIDO

PANDACAN FUEL FACILITY

Atienza favors oil over people, residents say

By Jerome Aning

"WE WILL only be safe if the depot is gone."

This is how Vladimir Cabigao, spokesman of the United Front to Oust the Oil Depot, expressed the anxiety of Pandacan residents over the looming extension of the depot's stay in the district.

Cabigao said Manila Mayor Lito Atienza has "shown his true colors" when he recently announced that he favors the prolonged operation of the oil depot.

"It nows appears that the mayor is not really concerned with the safety of the Pandacan residents, while the oil firms are apparently more concerned about their business interests," Cabigao said.

Yesterday, UFOOD called on Atienza and executives of Caltex, Shell and Petron to prioritize the residents' safety above concern for the supply of oil.

UFOOD is made up of community and non-government organizations.

Cabigao said any tragedy that might strike the depot and affect the residents will be the responsibility of the oil firms and City Hall.

Caltex, Shell and Petron came out with a paid advertisement on Monday asking for another 15 months to comply with terms of the memorandum of understanding they entered into with City Hall last June.

Under the MOU, the oil firms agreed to undertake "a scale-down program" without specifying how long it would take.

Atienza earlier said he is willing to extend the oil depot's stay in Pandacan, provided that the oil firms "show sincerity backed by substantial compliance to the MOU."

The oil companies were faulted for failing to dismantle 15 remaining fuel tanks, construct a "green buffer zone" and set up a common distribution facility.

Atienza has stressed that City Hall would still push for the ultimate phaseout of the depot, which the mayor said is non-negotiable.

But Atienza has passed to the City Council the task of deciding whether the oil firms will be allowed to stay longer.

The oil firms have committed that within the next 15 months, they would remove the remaining storage tanks and assured that supply of petroleum products in Metro Manila and Luzon will not be disrupted.

A portion of the buffer zone—known officially as the Pandacan Linear Park—would also be opened, the oil firms committed.

Molester uses Bey Blades to lure kids

VENDOR Rommel Valencia on Monday was accused of molesting four girls in Quezon City by promising to give them "Bey Blade" tops, a popular toy among children.

Valencia, 23, of Barangay Kristong Hari, Quezon City, is now behind bars after parents of the four girls filed a complaint against him before the Central Police District station in Galas.

PO3 Nenita Talledo said the suspect told the victims that he would give them Bey Blade tops if they would go to his house at around 5 p.m. Monday.

When the suspect got the four girls in his house, he started to molest them.

Later, the children told their parents about the incident. In turn, the parents reported the matter to the police.

Alcuin Papa

Pateros warehouse destroyed in fire

A WAREHOUSE of Nutrilicious beverage company in Pateros went up in smoke Monday afternoon.

No one was hurt, fire investigators said.

Smoke started billowing at 3:36 p.m. from the warehouse owned by a Rogelio Nemeño.

Firefighters quickly contained the flames before they could spread to nearby structures, said SFO1 Daniel Laron.

Still, the fire had eaten up an estimated P10 million in property before it was doused at 4:41 p.m.

Fire investigators could not yet tell what really caused the fire. But neighbors said it could have been triggered by welding sparks.

Christian Esguerra

Die Another Day

Congratulations to all the winners of "DIE ANOTHER DAY" raffle

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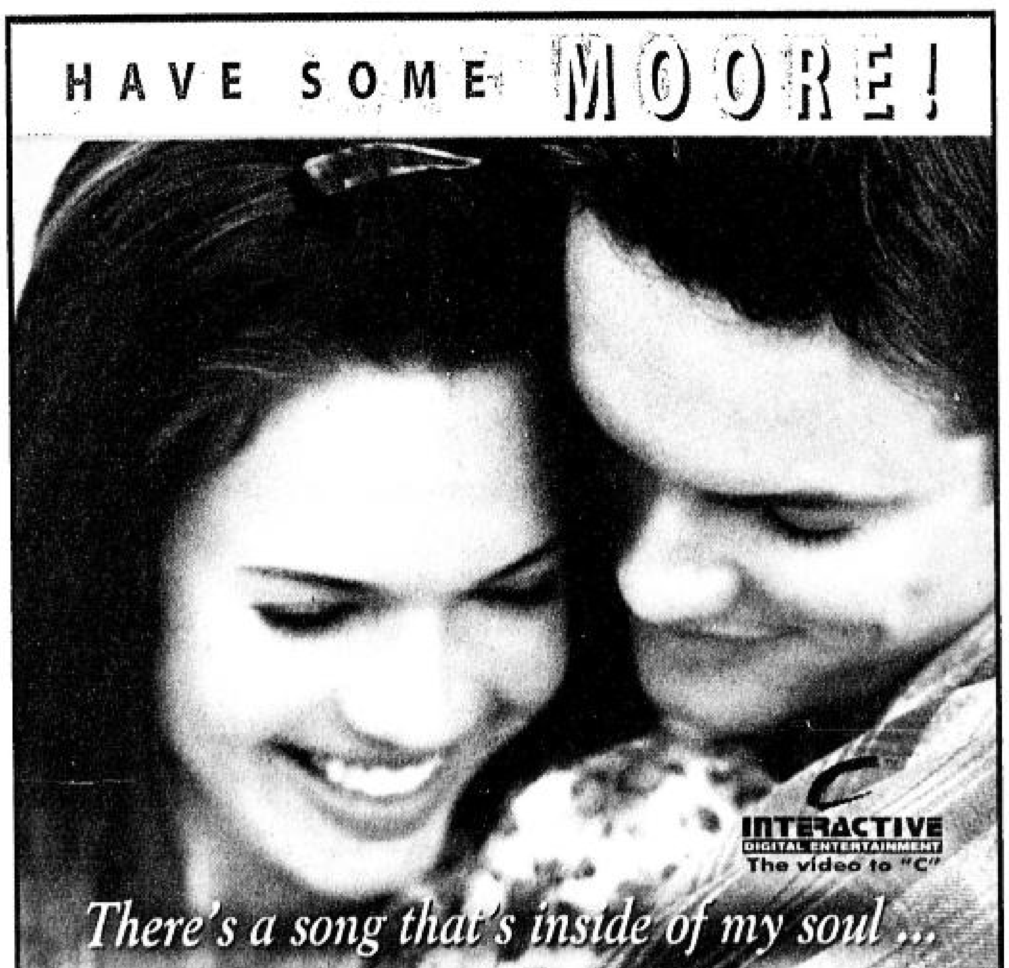

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Ray of hope

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

TO THOSE who wonder why we print complaint letters here, the answer is simple: to get results. His claims for fire insurance had been unattended for nearly two years, cried fellow newsman Manuel Oyson of Cebu. This was last week. Today, our friend sees ray of hope. His letter:

Thank you for airing my letter in your column of Jan. 18. I pray that Great Domestic Insurance Co., Capital Surety & Insurance Corp. and People's General Insurance will now come to their senses about paying the fire insurance claims of P6.5 million of our company due since June 4, 2001.

Do you know that your item drew the attention and concern of the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission? Being a presidential appointee, Insurance Commissioner Eduardo Malinis will one of these days receive an invitation from the PAGC for violation of the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act.

I am preparing my verified letter-complaint for filing with the PAGC against the Insurance Commissioner for his inability to crack the whip on the aforementioned insurance companies despite submission of all necessary documents to support our claim.

All that he and his deputy in Region 7 have been doing ever since I started complaining is to refer my complaints to the companies concerned for the routine "for comment." Naturally, their answers seek to avoid payment of the insurance claims of our company of which I am the president and board chairman.

***

Last Sept. 18, pursuant to the request of Rebecca S. Cagoco, claims manager of Great Domestic main office, I submitted through its official adjuster here in Cebu, Universal Adjusters and Appraisers, a certification from the office of the City Fire Marshall of Mandaue City that under the Fire Code of the Philippines, the Bureau of Fire Prevention is not allowed to issue any investigation report, but only "to issue a fire certification that a fire has occurred at a certain place, time and date, without reference to the cause of the fire."

Doesn't Great Domestic communicate with its adjuster? Before my letter was aired in your column of Jan. 18, the same Miss Cagoco (again) in a letter dated Dec. 27, 2002 asked for a Fire Clearance Report to be provided by the Mandaue Fire Department to support our claim. A report of the Fire Marshall of Mandaue City, dated Jan. 20, 2003, quotes Standard Operating Procedure Nr. 9, Para 5-2 which states that: "PC/Police/Fire Investigation units are banned from furnishing copies of FIR's to insurance adjusters. Any request of insurance adjusters for documents in a fire case shall be limited to the issuance of a certificate that a fire has occurred at a certain place, time and date without reference to the cause of the fire."

I am sorry to say that People's General Insurance and Capital Surety are only riding on the coattails of Great Domestic. It will only pay our claim if the lead insurer, Great Domestic, pays. I wonder why Commissioner Malinis allows this set-up.

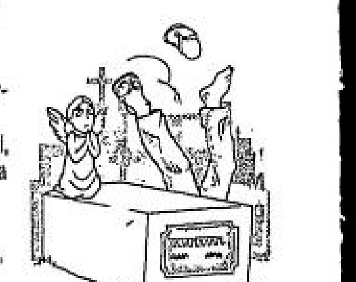
On another subject, I talked to my friend boxing promoter Perry McNeely last Monday. His cell at the BID office in Mandaue is just at the back of the Mandaue City Fire Marshal's . He still cannot understand why Immigration Commissioner Andrea Domingo will not allow him to post bail since the only case he is facing is for simple seduction (which he denies) and which is now ready for resolution by the Municipal Trial Court in Cebu City. He is hopeful about its outcome. This is a case not for Supreme Court Chief Justice Hilario G. Davide Jr. to look into but for Justice Secretary Simeon Datumanong since the BID is under him.

METROBRIEFS

5 nabbed for Makati scam

MAKATI policemen on Sunday night arrested Melita D. Furto, 37, Imelda D. Furto, 43, Celestina I. Furto, 36, Reynaldo D. Furto, 34, and Fe Y. Reyes, 41, for duping around 300 persons in a multimillion-peso cellular phone card scam. The suspects are all employees of Maria's Touch Trading firm, which holds office in Barangay Bangkal, Makati. But the alleged mastermind whom police have identified as Maria Nina Rebecca Marquez, of Sunset View Building, Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City, remains at large. PO3 Joel Delos Santos said around 300 persons have gone to the Makati Police headquarters to file complaints starting Sunday. He said that they expect more complainants to come forward. Police said the suspects were able to dupe the victims into investing money in a cell phone card business by promising a monthly 24% profit on their investments. Some of the complainants were retirees who invested hundreds of thousands of pesos. Minimum investment is P12,500 for a box of cell cards, with a return of P700 a week, said Delos Santos. *Leila Salaverria*

Dead in Manila graveyard



NICANOR M. Santos, 53, earned a living by watching over the dead at the Manila South Cemetery. But nobody was apparently looking after the graveyard caretaker on Monday when he was killed in the cemetery where he resided and earned a living. Santos, of Manila South Cemetery, Makati, apparently fell off from a niche where he was resting and died, said Detective David Tuazon, of the Western Police District. Tuazon was quick to add that no one could say for certain what happened. He said the victim was last seen alive at around 8 p.m. by Santos' fellow caretaker, Jose A. Bandera, 27. At around 6 a.m., Bandera found the victim dead beside a niche. "He was already stiff and cold," said Tuazon. "There was a bruise in his right ear, apparently due to the fall." Bandera informed the victim's family, who then told the cemetery guard. The police arrived later and were told that the victim had a heart problem. *Philip Tubeza*

Killed in Tondo fiesta

TWO MURDERS marred the Feast of the Sto. Niño in Tondo, Manila on Sunday. Criminology student Arbert Medina, of Parola Compound, Tondo, was stabbed dead during a rumble involving nine other men Sunday night on Matiisin Street in Tondo, said Detective Alfredo Salazar. Those injured in the free-for-all were identified as Noel Balmedian, 23, Israel Jazareno, 27, Rufo Gaven, 20, and Eugene Nono, 23; all residents of Tondo. Salazar said the rumble broke out Sunday night in front of the house of Nono, when he punched Gaven for no apparent reason. The fight broke up when people saw Medina already slumped on the ground, gasping for breath. Early Monday morning, Angelina Belmonte found her husband Roland on the ground bleeding outside their house on Gen. Barrientos Street, Tondo. Police said Angelina left her husband to fetch her daughter about 12:30 a.m. Roland, 52, a driver, was then having a drink with his relatives. When she returned a few minutes later, she found her husband had been stabbed to death. *Philip Tubeza*

Kakampi ng Naaapi! Magbabalik na!

Ricky Lee to hold workshops

AWARD-WINNING scriptwriter Ricky Lee will hold his film and TV scriptwriting workshop this year at the Tamaraw beach resort, Aninuan Puerto Galera for three days and two nights.

The workshop will be facilitated by Grupong Tinta, a non-profit organization trusted to the promotion of creative writing mainly through conducting workshops.

Lee is the veteran scriptwriter behind such classics as "Himala," "Karnal," "Salome," "Brutal" and "Moral." Some of his recent works are "Lahar," "Rizal," "Lagarista," "Anak" and "Mila."

Lee is now the headwriter of the top-rated TV shows "Maalaala Mo Kaya" and prime-time soap-opera "Bituin," starring Nora Aunor.

Workshop dates are March 21, 22 and 23 (Friday to Sunday), inclusive of meals, accommodation and transportation. No professional writing experience is necessary. This will be on a first come, first serve basis.

Registrations will be held Jan. 25 and 26, Saturday and Sunday, 1 to 6 p.m. at the UP Film Center in Diliman, Quezon City.

For more details, call 456-2084 or mobile 0916-5823085. Look for Rahyan Carlos.

TV series features ...

From page A28

Television" will debut on RPN 9 on Feb. 10, at 11 p.m.

Hosted by singer-actor Richard Merk and actress Maricel Laxa-Pangilinan, "OPTV" will feature the real-life stories of Overseas Filipino Workers and their families, as well as news reports and job opportunities that would appeal to Filipinos who are also dreaming of the chance to work abroad.

Behind the scenes are director Don Escudero, award-winning cinematographer Neil Daza who will sit as creative director, headwriter Manny Castañeda, production designer Mike Guison (best known for his award-winning work in "Laro sa Baga") and Denni Tan, stylist for the show.

Daza said in an interview with Inquirer that the group will try to put a fresh spin on OFWs in every episode by bringing in independent directors to produce at least one of the segments every week.

There will be five segments: Buhay OP, country profile, OP Insider, Bilib Ako Sa 'Yo and OP in the City.

These segments will portray the actual life and experiences of overseas Pinoys, the issues they have to deal with in their places of work, the family and social concerns of a parent or sibling who rarely comes home, and the measures taken by the government and NGOs to ease the pain of separation or protect OFWs from violence and abuse.

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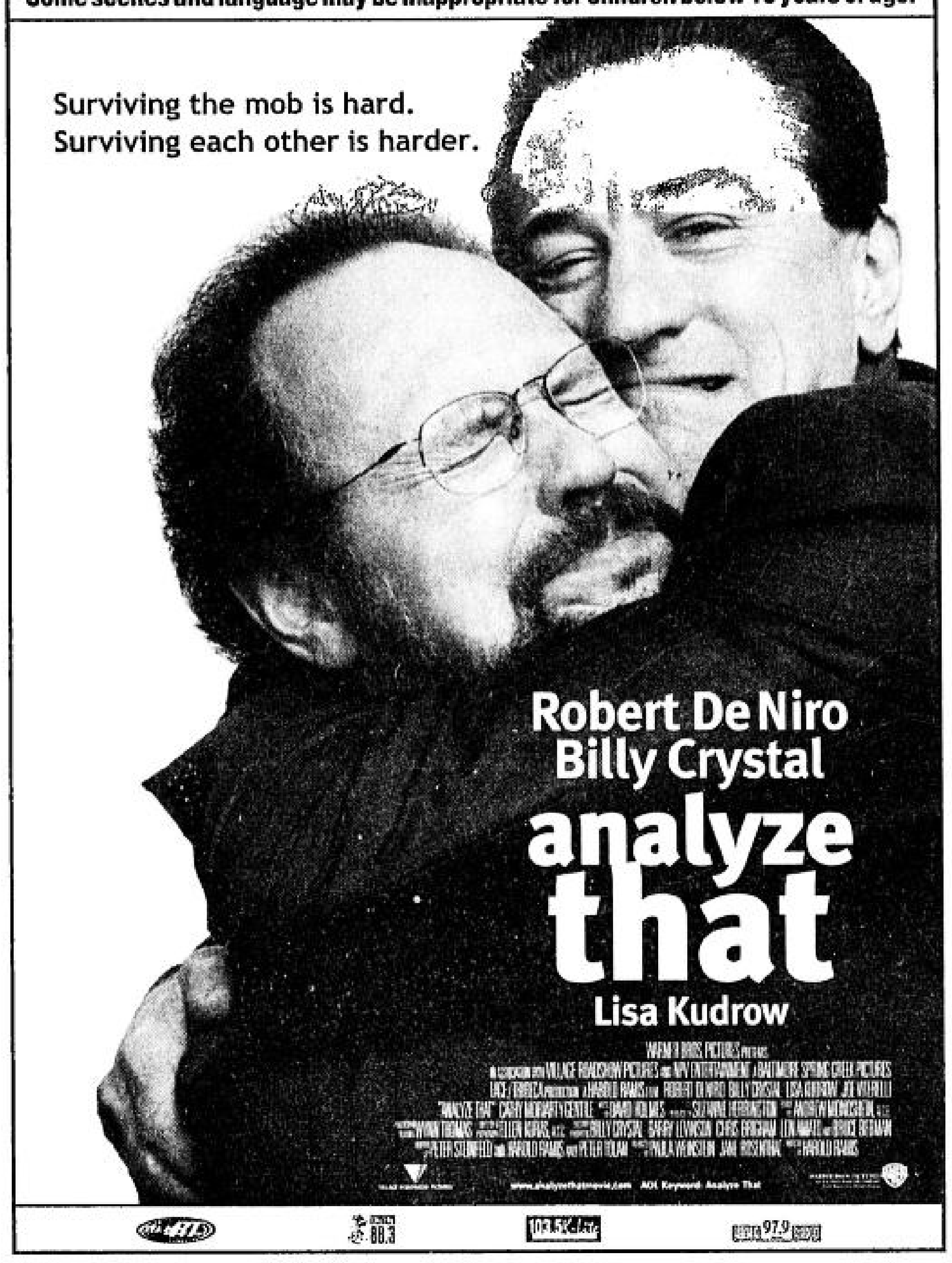

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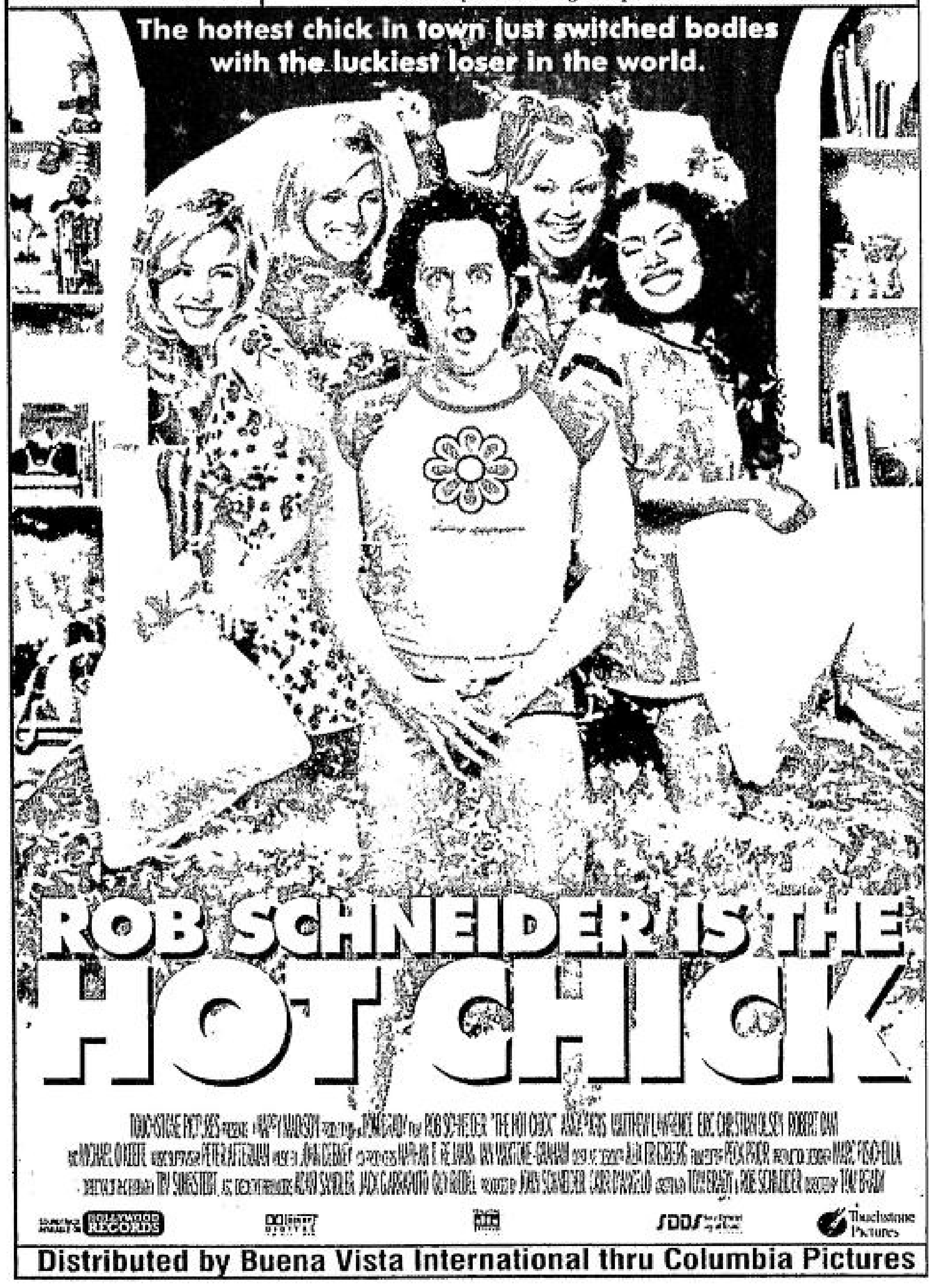

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hanggang kailan
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OPENS JANUARY 29

Stand-up comedians need to be censored, too

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Leah Salterio

WHEN the INQUIRER was planning for the launch of its nationwide Job Market Fair to be held next month, names of artists who will be invited to perform in the event were listed down.

When it came to choosing a comedian to host the early afternoon program, the bosses said they wanted someone who can address a corporate audience, has a good command of English and one who is not loud nor boisterous.

There was a long pause and no one could readily come up with any name. Then **Arnel Ignacio** was singled out.

I came with up other names like **Jon Santos, Giselle Sanchez** and **Candy Pangilinan.**

After the meeting, I started to realize there is indeed a dearth of good comedians for a corporate crowd. If we go by the numbers, there are a dime-a-dozen stand-up comedians who can easily make people laugh. However, their kind of comedy is often considered crass. Onstage, they resort to cursing or making fun of their audience, to a fault.

In one corporate gathering of the Ayala Group of Companies, a comedian-host was said to have made fun of Don **Jaime Zobel de Ayala**, whom the host called "kamukha ni Matet." It turned out the comedian didn't know who Don Jaime is.

In a party of a TV network, a comedian lashed out at a guy who laughed so hard and called him "ulol." The comedian didn't know the guy is one of the top executive producers in the network.

Stand-up comedians get away with their green jokes, filthy humor and invectives, since no one censors their live performances. Their inanities may be tolerable, but cursing someone from the audience is not funny. In fact, it is insulting and humiliating.

Being a comedian does not give one a license to curse, humiliate or make fun of anyone from his audience. A comedian should entertain and deliver antics or punchlines that can make the audience laugh.

Even if there's no agency to censor their acts, stand-up comedians should be conscious about the kind of live entertainment they present. If some refuse to be decent or wholesome, at least avoid embarrassing people. Stick to being funny, because that's what the audience wants.

Not going bold

EVEN if actresses her age have been making big bucks by going sexy, **Angelika de la Cruz** insists she will never be a convert to the bold bandwagon.

"I'm not thinking of going sexy," says the 21-year-old actress. "I don't think I'm cut out for it. I'm not comfortable showing some skin. When I did my first kissing scene onscreen with **Robin Padilla** in 'Hari ng Selda,' it was a little hard for me to do. I was shaking before the take."

AT EASE IN DRAMA. Angelika de la Cruz stars in GMA 7's soap series, "Habang Kapiling Ka."

Angelika is apparently at ease in dramatic portrayals, which she does best. She topbills GMA 7's widely followed soap series, "Habang Kapiling Ka." The story revolves around the saga of Angelika's character Erica, who was deprived of a luxurious life that was rightfully hers when she was swapped at birth with Pierre Paolo (**Railey Valeroso**).

In the series, Angelika is paired with **Victor Neri**, who plays Julius, the guy who loves Erica since childhood.

The succeeding episodes of "Habang Kapiling Ka" will focus on the love story of Julius and Erica, thus boosting the young loveteam of Angelika and Victor. The stellar cast of the series includes **Snooky Serna, Albert Martinez, Ruffa Gutierrez, Alma Moreno** and **Chin-Chin Gutierrez.**

Working together in the series has made Angelika and Victor closer to each other. Angelika denies any serious romantic involvement with Victor, but admits the guy is now courting her.

"We've been friends for a long time, when Victor was still doing 'Sa Dulo ng Walang Hanggan' for ABS-CBN and I was doing 'Ikaw Lang ang Mamahalin' for GMA 7," Angelika grants. "Then we got a chance to work together in the GMA 7 tele-sine 'Liwanag ng Hatinggabi.' Since then, we would occasionally go out to watch a movie or listen to bands."

Angelika shares there is indeed something beautiful going on between them. "But we don't want to destroy that by telling everyone that we're romantically involved," she explains. "I enjoy his company. We enjoy the time we're together and I guess that's the most important thing."

Angelika even candidly talks about Vitto, Victor's two-year-old love child with a non-show biz girl.

"I've met his son and I was introduced to his parents on New Year's day," Angelika says.

The eldest in a brood of four children, Angelika discloses her father has earlier discouraged her from having a relationship with a show biz guy.

"I understand that," Angelika asserts. "My parents want a peaceful life for me. But they welcomed Victor at home and that made me happy."

With her soaring career, Angelika is inevitably not spared from controversies that hound any show biz star. There's her reported feud with her fellow GMA 7 artist, **Jolina Magdangal**. Yet, Angelika attests she and Jolina are far from being enemies.

"There are people trying to compare us and pit us against each other," Angelika says. "Others create an issue out of a mere production number that Jolina or I would do on 'SOP.' But I'm not insecure about Jolina. There's no reason to be insecure anyway. I just had a new soap on GMA 7.

"Recently, I even texted Jolina to ask her when is her major concert at Araneta. She replied and said it's on March 21. I told her I'll try to watch."

Taking the controversies in stride, Angelika simply wants to get on with her show biz career. This year, she expresses her desire to cut a new album for Alpha Records once her court case against BMG Pilipinas, her erstwhile recording company, gets settled. Angelika released two albums for BMG Records.

"I want to concentrate on my singing again," Angelika says.

Kyla in Singapore

THE MTV Asia Music Awards on Jan. 24 will see EMI Philippines recording artists **Kyla** and Slapshock in Singapore for the awards ceremony.

Kyla will perform with the popular UK boy band Blue. Both artists are actually familiar with each other. It was Kyla who opened for Blue's highly successful stint in Manila.

Best-selling rap-metal act Slapshock will have a collaboration with Malaysian rock band Popshuvit for the latter's own album for Asian release.

"OPTV" TEAM. Program hosts Richard Merk and Maricel Laxa-Pangilinan (center) with young segment producers Inah Borra (left) and Tonette Quiogue.

TV series features inspiring real-life stories of OFWs

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

OVERSEAS Filipino Workers have always been trumpeted to be the new "heroes" of the Philippines because of the roughly $7 billion worth of remittances they bring in to the country every year.

Unfortunately, OFWs are often portrayed in the news, TV shows and movies as battered domestic helpers, Japayukis who work like prostitutes and hapless factory workers.

And while they are called "heroes," their stories are not often shared with the view of inspiring others or making Filipinos back home truly appreciate what they do.

It was for this reason that the group of Mary Jean Borra, which has been in the business of sending workers abroad for more than 10 years, decided to put up a show that would put OFWs under a better light.

Far from being an amateur project by a first-time TV producer, Borra's Wall City Entertainment put together leading figures in the field to come up with a worthy TV series for and about Filipino expatriates.

"OPTV" or "Overseas Pinoy

TV/ A27

CINEMATOGRAPHER Neil Daza.

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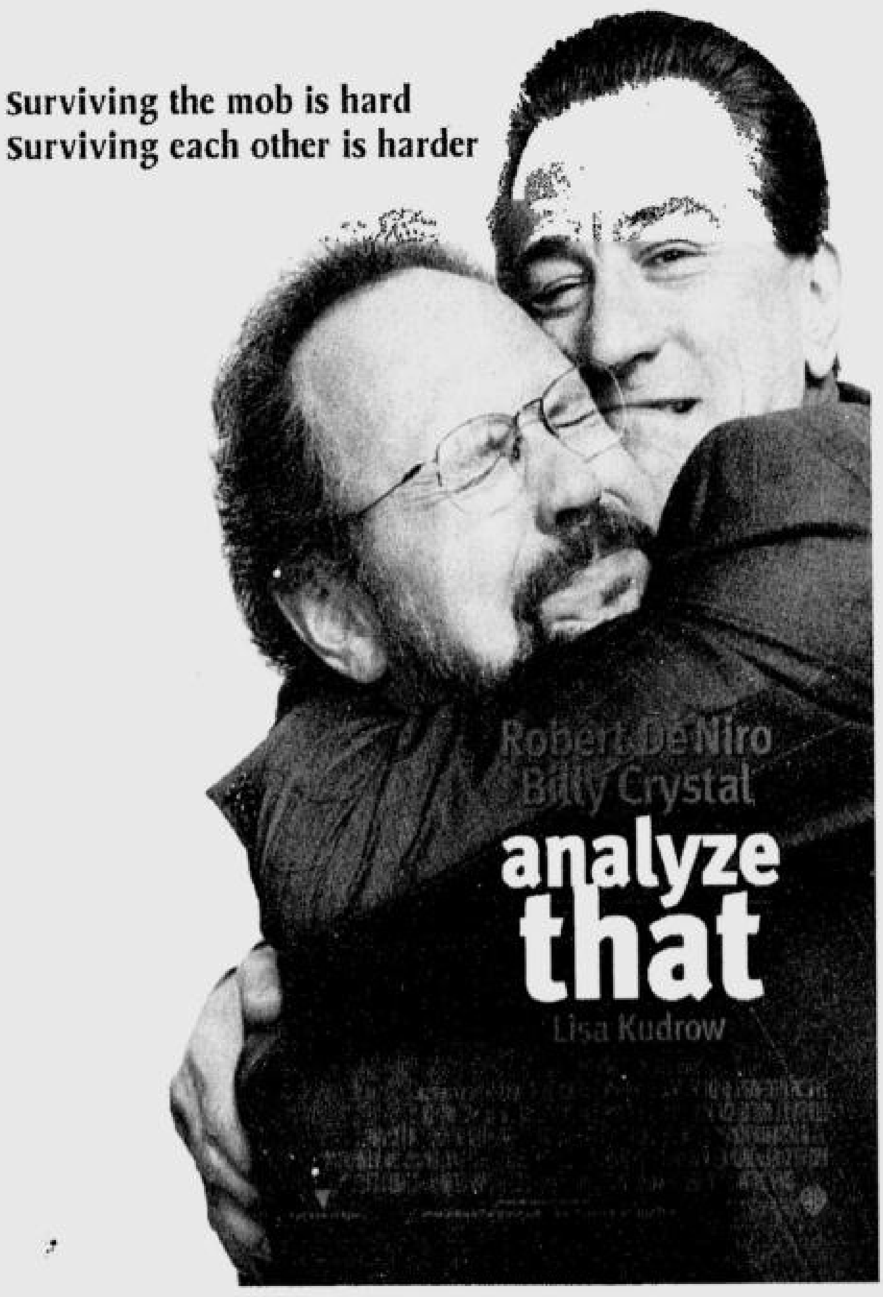

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Where was Recto ...

From page A32

Organizers described the rally as the biggest gathering of entertainers since the 1983 protest against the censorship board that was then led by Maria Kalaw Katigbak.

Lawmakers who joined the rally were Senators Ramon Revilla Sr., Robert Jaworski and Loi Ejercito, and Ilocos Norte Rep. Imee Marcos who all said they came not as government officials but as an actor (Revilla), a doctor (Ejercito), a filmmaker (Marcos, who was behind the Experimental Cinema of the Philippines when her father was in power) and an athlete (Jaworski, a long-time basketball icon).

People's problem

FPJ, who is widely perceived to be of the players in the 2004 national elections, said that although the additional tax would be small compared to the total earnings of big stars like him, "it's the people who would carry the burden because the responsibility of paying the tax would be passed on to them."

"*Ilan lang ba sa mga artista ang kumikita ng malaki?*" asked Dolphy.

"If they deduct more tax from our earnings, most of us would be forced to dismiss our drivers and assistants."

Organisasyon ng Pilipinong Mangaawit president Mitch Valdez pointed out that producers would produce less shows and hire less performers "because the producers would want to avoid paying higher taxes."

Singer Celeste Legaspi, who represents her theater company PhilStage, said the additional tax would aggravate the already pathetic situation in theater.

"What more does the government want from us?" she asked. "To think that it does not even have a clear program for culture."

Filmmaker Carlitos Siguion-Reyna, speaking in behalf of the Directors Guild of Philippines Inc. (DGPI), said the rally participants were raising four points: the abolition of the value-added tax, the amendment of the tax law to permanently exclude professionals from paying taxes, the reforming of the tax code so that the government would go after the big tax evaders, and collecting taxes from foreign companies doing business in the country.

No answer

Actor Richard Gomez noted that in 2002, the industry produced only 94 movies compared to 127 in 2001 and 120 in 2000.

"We fear that if the government would implement the additional tax, fewer movies would be produced this year," Gomez said.

A member of the Pami (Professional Artists' Managers Inc.) said the organization tried to contact Senator Recto, chair of the Senate committee on ways and means, through his wife, actress and Lipa City Mayor Vilma Santos. But Recto reportedly would not answer any of their calls.

Pami members said they were disappointed over Recto's lack of commitment considering his show biz connection.

On Nov. 18, 2002, Recto filed a bill which provides for the permanent abolition of the VAT.

"Why only now?" said a Pami member who asked not to be identified. "Recto should have worked for its abolition years ago.

"He should have done something before it was signed into law in 1997."

Other members of the entertainment industry who wore black shirts, carried protest placards and chanted slogans in front of the Senate were Eddie Garcia, Phillip Salvador, Martin Nievera, Aga Muhlach, Ronnie Ricketts, Tirso Cruz III, Gina Alajar, Joel Lamangan, Herbert Bautista, Zsa Zsa Padilla, John Estrada, Gelli de Belen, Ariel Rivera and German Moreno.

Also spotted were Eddie Gutierrez and Anabelle Rama, Marvin Agustin, Lani Mercado, Dominic Ochoa, Aiza Seguerra and Ai-Ai de las Alas.

Sharon sick

Megastar Sharon Cuneta sent a text message saying that she had bronchitis and had been working until 2 a.m. that day, but that "I am with you in spirit." Her husband is also a first-time senator, Francis Pangilinan.

The stars gathered in front of the Manila Film Center at 1 p.m. Monday and marched to the Senate at the GSIS building in Pasay City an hour later.

Senator Revilla invited 13 representatives of different sectors to his office for a dialogue. They were movie directors Siguion-Reyna and Joey Javier Reyes, talent managers Girlie Rodis and June Rufino, actors Poe, Dolphy, Gomez, Garcia, Muhlach and Edu Manzano, Julie Po of the Concerned Artists of the Philippines, Jojo Carabeo of the Health Alliance for Democracy and Philippine Medical Association representative Jojo Sabile.

Sabile said doctors would have no choice but to raise their professional fees if they have to pay VAT.

"Most of us operate on patients for humanitarian reasons, especially doctors who work in public hospitals," Cabili said. "Our professional fees are our only source of income."

Lawyer Joel Cadiz said lawyers are willing to pay the additional tax as long as the government would seriously work on improving its services.

"But the people who are supposed to go after tax evaders are the same people who connive with them," he said.

Boob-tube-booboos

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

HOST: How are things coming along these days for the Jules and Assunta wedding?

Field reporter: It was a happy occasion for the newlyweds' friends. Let's talk to one of them. Ma'am, how did Jules look during the wedding ceremony?

Friend: Oh, he was overwhelmed by joy, because having Assunta is no joke!

(Whatever do you mean!)

***

Host: What makes your restaurant better than the other dining places in this area?

Owner: Well, for one thing, we have apple parking spaces.

(That's great—if you're an apple!)

***

Host: What is the most serious problem faced by the government today?

Guest: No doubt about it, it's the cunamic crisis we have today.

(Cunamic? *Bago 'yun, a*)

***

Host: Why is the eyewitness hiding?

Co-host: Well, according to this report, he was given warning *na siya ang sumnod-sunod papan-sunod na papatayin*. Sorry I buckled, *malalim kasi ang Tagalog sa* report.

("Siya and sunod na papatayin"—what's so *malalim* about that?!)

***

Host: What was the gun used to kill the victim?

Guest: We will know more for sure after the investigator have studied the clue from the bullet frogmen recovered from the victim.

(Frogmen? Frogmen?—Oh, fragments!)

***

Host : I hear that your mother was also a sexy movie starlet?

Sexy starlet: Yes, I followed in her feet!

(*Ah*, that's footstep, dear—footsteps.)

***

Host: That's our first batch of contestants. What up next?

Co-host: Before we meet the second batch, let's now meet our pile of judges!

('Panel' sounds much better, sir.)

***

Host: You have been a star for more than 10 years. What's the secret of your continuing success?

Guest: You have to love your work. Also even if you're successful, don't sleep in your laurels!

(Yes, pajamas aren't as itchy!)

***

Host: What do you want to say to the bombers responsible for this latest deadly blast?

Guest: To them, I say, you may believe in your principles, but I don't think it's fair that the life of innocent people will be suffer in this case!

(Too bad, you were doing so well..)

***

Host: What are officials doing to catch the perpetrators of this latest crime?

Guest: The public should not worry, because we have already ordered a shirt and rescue operation against them!

(Now, you've got us worried!)

ABS-CBN program changes

TWO telenovelas dubbed in Tagalog have premiered on ABS-CBN Channel 2. At 11 a.m., weekdays, "Daniela" stars Hispanic teen singing star **Litzy** as a young woman who dreams of becoming a ballerina and finding true love, but is maltreated by her stepmother and half-sister.

At 2 p.m., "Altagracia" topbills 1984 Miss World **Astrid Carolina Herrera** as an heiress who regains her freedom after serving a 20-year prison sentence for a crime she didn't commit.

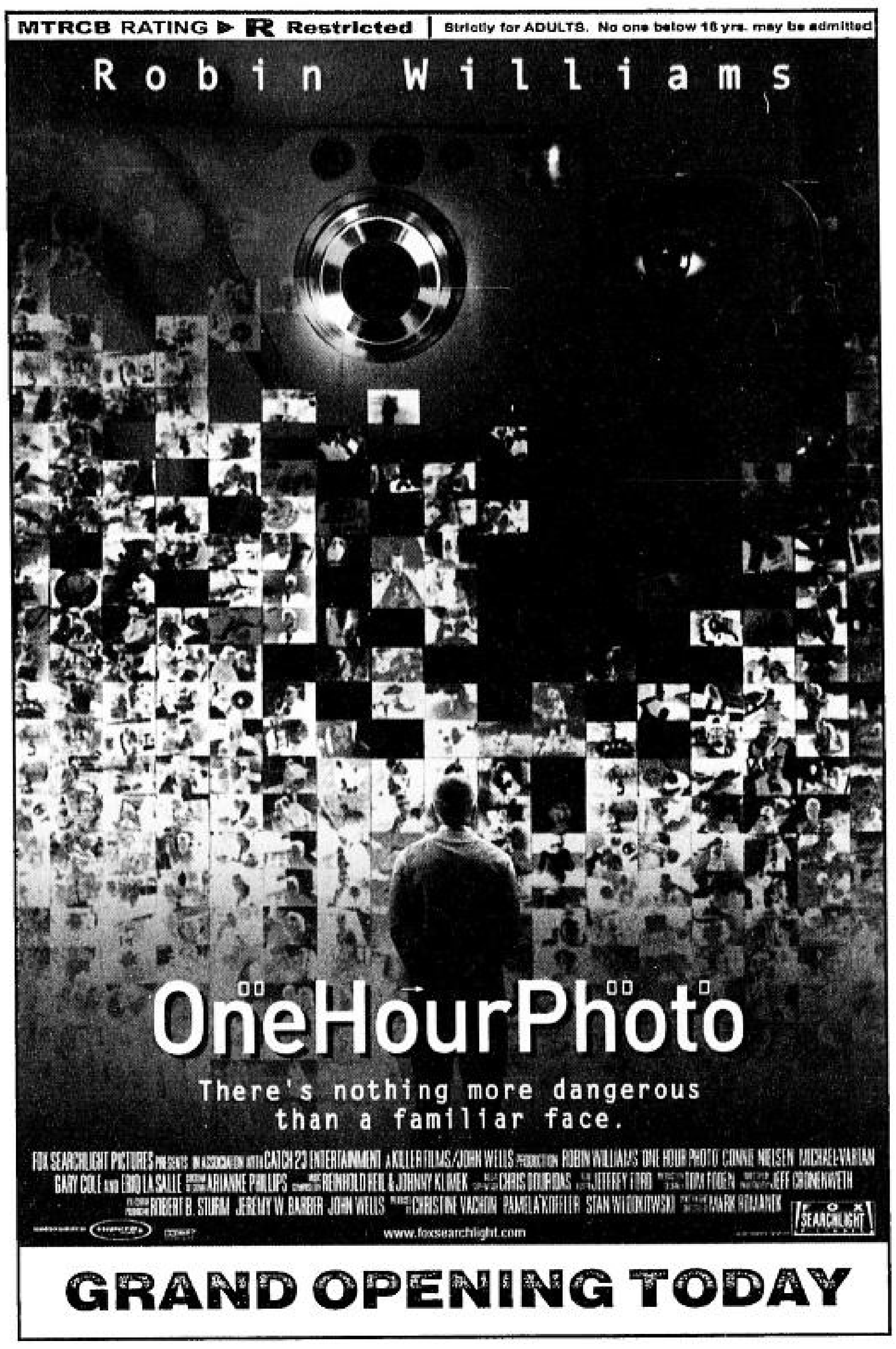
At 5:30 p.m., "Etc" is now being aired only three times a week, every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. The Tuesday show is now "Mission X: Early Edition," and the Thursday program is "Gus Abelgas: Nag-uulat."

Meanwhile, starting Jan. 26, "Dong Puno Nightly," will air every Sunday from 11:30 p.m., right after "Sunday Family Cinema."

On Saturday nights, "Arriba, Arriba" is now telecast at 7:30 p.m., while "Bida si Mister, Bida si Misis" follows at 8:30 p.m., and "FPJ action Cinema" airs at 9:30 p.m.

11 p.m. shows: Mondays, "The Correspondents"; Tuesdays, "Mission X"; Wednesdays, "Pipol", Thursdays, "Gus Abelgas: Nag-uulat"; Fridays, "Isyu."

Sunday morning cartoon treats: 9:30 a.m., "Max Steel"; 10 a.m., "Heavy Gear"; 10:30 a.m., "Galidor."



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One-night Valentine show brings back Abba music and memories

SHOWS

ABBA is back.

The '90s saw a massive resurgence in the popularity of Swedish super group Abba.

Now with the overwhelming TV exposure and huge demands for the show, here is your opportunity to witness "Abbasolutely Fabbaulous," performing the "Thank You for the Music" which is touring Asia as part of their world tour.

The show's inception in 1989 was to utilize four top-class musicians who could recreate the look and more importantly, the sound of the '70s pop phenomenon.

Taking charge of this particular awesome foursome is Jamie Anderson, an original member of the band. Jamie who has been based in Europe has been impersonating and performing all his life and enjoys the keyboard player Benny Anderson.

Joining him onstage as his now jilted wife Anni-Frid Lyngstad is Norwegian born Kristy Rankin. Kristy's capability to sing any style of music has seen her perform anything—classical, pop, rock 'n' roll and country.

Kristy's partner in song onstage is Australia's own Belinda Goodwin. Belinda's diverse vocal talents see her excel as the recluse Agnetha Faltskog.

Playing the somber Bjorn Ulvaeus is Danish born singer-songwriter and guitarist Colin Hill, who started his career performing in festival shows throughout Scandinavia. Colin's first love in music is the big rock band sounds of the early '80s, but loves to play the role of the talent Bjorn in the show, which has taken him to all parts of the world he thought he would never have a chance to visit.

Australia's hottest young Mapex endorsed drummer Brett Millican from Brisbane, Queensland also joins the quartet onstage.

The performance covers 30 songs based on the Abba live tour of 1977—like "Dancing Queen," "Waterloo," "Mama Mia" and "I Do, I Do, I Do."

The Abba tribute band performs at the Araneta Coliseum, 8 p.m. on Feb. 15.

Tickets are on sale through TicketNet at 911-5555.

January nights

TAVERN on the Square presents the Side A band on Jan. 21 and 28, while Rage Band heats up Thursday nights on Jan. 23 and 30.

Fridays are packed with happy hour specials starting with Acoustic Dreams and finishing off with A Petite band.

A special Angfourgettables performance is set Jan. 29.

Tavern is at the second level, Greenbelt 3, Ayala Center, Makati. Happy hours are from 5 to 9 p.m.

Register your e-mail address at tavernonthesquare@yahoo.com for regular entertainment schedule updates.

Call 757-4484 for reservations or inquiries about corporate packages, product launches and private parties.

Siete Pecados

RIVETING acts perform every night at Siete Pecados Live this month. Catch the rhythms of Pido and Take One and Flipside on Mondays.

Dance to the music of Kislev and Family Cruz on Tuesdays.

G Steps and Flipside take centerstage on Wednesdays.

Have a blast with Illustra and Band@Work on Thursdays.

Groove to the beat of Shoop and Flipside on Fridays.

Fat Session and Kislev perform on Saturdays.

Whether you're into dancing, grooving or reminiscing, Siete Pecados Live is the place to be at Westin Philippine Plaza. Show starts 8 p.m., with a minimum consumable charge of only P250 Mondays to Thursdays and P500 on Fridays and Saturdays.

For inquiries, call Westin Philippine Plaza at 551-5555, local 1231, 1232 or 5000.

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- 2 THE RING (HOLLYWOOD)
- 8 MILE 11:40, 1:50, 4:00, 6:10, 8:20, 10:30
- 4 TRY SEVENTEEN
- ANALYZE THAT
- 6 THE LORD OF THE RINGS: TWO TOWERS
- 7 THE HOT CHICK

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- Onstage: OGIE ALCASID: OA SA PUSO Feb. 7, 8, 13, 14 & 15

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- 8 MILE 12:45, 2:55, 5:05, 7:15, 9:25, 11:30
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- ANALYZE THAT 11:30, 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30, 11:30
- THE RING (HOLLYWOOD) 12:40, 2:50, 5:00, 7:10, 9:20, 11:30
- TRY SEVENTEEN 11:00, 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30, 11:30

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- THE RING (HOLLYWOOD)
- ANALYZE THAT
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3 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	HOT CHICK
4 (SDDS)	LOD OF THE RINGS 2
5 (DTS)	TRY SEVENTEEN
6	ONE HOUR PHOTO
7	ANAYLYZE THAT

FarmersPlaza CINEMAS
tel 911.3101 loc. 821.8242.8400

1	MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO
2	LORD OF THE RINGS 2

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa Laguna)
tel (049) 534.2185, 534.2198

1	BANGKERO
2	8 MILE
3 (DTS)	LORD OF THE RING

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1	THE RING
2 (DTS)	8 MILE
3 (DOLBY)	LORD OF THE RING
4	HOT CHICK

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146

1	THE RING
2 (DOLBY)	LORD OF THE RING
3 (DTS)	8 MILE
4	HOT CHICK

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1	HALF PAST DEAD
2	SWIM FAN
3 (DOLBY)	LORD OF THE RING
4	RESERVE

Cinema 2000 MetroTown
(Tarlac) tel(045) 982.1729

1	BANGKERO
2	HEAVEN
3 (DOLBY)	HALF PAST DEAD
4 (DTS)	

Magic Star Cinema
(Tarlac City) tel (045) 611.4305

1 (DOLBY)	HALF PAST DEAD
2 (DTS)	BANGKERO
3	

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS)	LORD OF THE RING
2	RESERVE
3 (DTS)	THE RING
4	MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY)	LORD OF THE RING
2	HOT CHICK
3 (DTS)	BANGKERO
4	THE RING
5	8 MILE

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883

1	LORD OF THE RING
2	BANGKERO
3	THE RING

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249.2558

1	LORD OF THE RING
2	THE RING
3	8 MILE

Mega Center Mall
(Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283

1	SWIMFAN
2	BIRTHDAY GIRL
3 (DTS)	DOUBLE SEDUCTION
4 (DOLBY)	LASTIKMAN

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel (049) 531.4808

1 (DTS)	RESERVE
2 (DTS)	RESERVE

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657

1	KERIDA
2	SHAOLIN SOCCER
3	BANGKERO

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1	KERIDA
2	SHAOLIN SOCCER
3	HALF PAST DEAD
4	LIKE MIKE

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1 (DOLBY EX)	LORD OF THE RING
2	HOT CHICK
3 (DTS ES)	8 MILE
4	THE RING

Cine Nepo Mall
(Angeles City) tel (045) 322-3571

1	LORD OF THE RING
2	HALF PAST DEAD
3 (DOLBY)	HOT CHICK
4	

*Movies are subject to change without prior notice

ADVANCED SCREENING THX DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

FESTIVAL CINEMA
Level 4
Festival Supermall
Filinvest - Alabang
Tel. 85035-71 to 72

BE THE FIRST TO WITNESS

THE LORD OF THE RINGS
THE TWO TOWERS

NOW SHOWING

SM CINEMA
SM Dial-A-Movie Tel. 833-9999
NOW SHOWING

SM CITY BACOOR
4173868

1	ONE HOUR PHOTO
2	TRY SEVENTEEN
3	8 MILE
4	THE RING (HOLLYWOOD)
5	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
6	HOT CHICK
	MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO
8	ANALYZE THAT

SM CENTERPOINT
7149522 -7161416

1	TRY SEVENTEEN
2	ONE HOUR PHOTO
3	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
	MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO
5	8 MILE
6	HALF PAST DEAD
7	HOT CHICK
8	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
9	THE RING (HOLLYWOOD)
10	ANALYZE THAT

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
9350749

1	MANO PO
2	ANALYZE THAT
3	LASTIKMAN
4	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
5	8 MILE
6	TRY SEVENTEEN
7	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
8	HOT CHICK
9	THE RING (HOLLYWOOD)
	MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO
11	ONE HOUR PHOTO
12	HALF PAST DEAD

SM CITY MANILA
5239240

1	TRY SEVENTEEN
2	THE RING (HOLLYWOOD)
3	HOT CHICK
4	THE RING (HOLLYWOOD)
5	8 MILE
6	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
7	ANALYZE THAT
	MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO
9	RING (JAPANESE)
10	RING (JAPANESE)
11	ONE HOUR PHOTO
12	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS

SM MEGAMALL
6331901 • 6329401

1	THE RING (HOLLYWOOD)
2	HOT CHICK
3	8 MILE
4	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
5	RING (JAPANESE)
6	ANALYZE THAT
7	ONE HOUR PHOTO
8	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
9	TRY SEVENTEEN
10	THE RING (HOLLYWOOD)
11	HALF PAST DEAD
	MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
9295452

1	HOT CHICK
2	RING (JAPANESE)
3	TRY SEVENTEEN
4	ANALYZE THAT
5	ONE HOUR PHOTO
6	THE RING (HOLLYWOOD)
7	8 MILE
8	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS

SM SOUTHMALL
8096888

1	ANALYZE THAT
2	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
3	ONE HOUR PHOTO
4	TRY SEVENTEEN
5	LASTIKMAN
6	HALF PAST DEAD
7	HOT CHICK
8	8 MILE
9	THE RING (HOLLYWOOD)
	MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO

SM CITY CEBU
2313876

1	CHARLOTTE GRAY
2	HALF PAST DEAD
3	8 MILE
	MY BIG FAT GREEK WEDDING
5	BANGKERO
6	KERIDA
7	VAMPS
8	THE RING (HOLLYWOOD)

SM CITY ILOILO
3209422

1	KERIDA
2	CLOSED
3	HALF PAST DEAD
4	BROTHERHOOD OF THE WOLF
5	MY BIG FAT GREEK WEDDING
6	THE RING (HOLLYWOOD)
7	CLOSED
8	UNFAITHFUL CONCUBINE

SM CITY PAMPANGA
7128015

1	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
2	8 MILE
3	SWIMFAN
4	THE RING (HOLLYWOOD)
5	KERIDA
6	HOT CHICK

SM SUPER CTR. SUCAT
8204975

1	THE RING (HOLLYWOOD)
2	8 MILE
3	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
4	ANALYZE THAT

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN
2514302

1	8 MILE
2	TRY SEVENTEEN
3	THE RING (HOLLYWOOD)
4	MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO

SM CITY DAVAO
2976998

1	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
2	UNFAITHFUL CONCUBINE
3	LIKE MIKE
4	HALF PAST DEAD
5	8 MILE
6	THE RING (HOLLYWOOD)

SM BICUTAN
776-3055

1	HOT CHICK
2	8 MILE
3	THE RING (HOLLYWOOD)
4	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
859-2884

1	THE RING (HOLLYWOOD)
2	KERIDA
3	SWIMFAN
4	HALF PAST DEAD

THE PODIUM CINEMA
18 ADB Avenue Ortigas Center Mandaluyong City
633-8976

1	THE RING (HOLLYWOOD VERSION) 11:30 FS/12:00 MF/3:40/7:20/ 10:30 LFS/11:00 LMF/2:10 END
2	8 MILE 11:00 FS/11:20 MF/1:40/4:00/6:20/ 8:40/10:30 LFS/11:00 LMF/12:50 END

LATE NIGHT SCREENING DURING FRIDAYS AND SATURDAYS
Matinee : P100.00 • Screening until 5pm • Monday thru Friday
Regular Rate : P120.00 • After 5pm • Saturday • Sunday • Holidays (Reserved Seating)

Movies are subject to change without prior notice

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@ Robinsons Malls
call-a-movie: 536- 7812
NOW SHOWING

Galleria
632- 9115- 16
633- 7641 loc. 279

THX	LORD OF THE RINGS II - 11:00 AM (MF); 2:30 PM; 6:00 PM; 9:30 PM (LMF)
2	HOT CHICK
3	ANALYZE THAT
4	ONE HOUR PHOTO
5	8 MILE
6	LORD OF THE RINGS II
7	HALF PAST DEAD
8	THE RING (US VERSION)
9	RING (JAPANESE VERSION)
10	TRY SEVENTEEN

MATINEE PRICE: P80 THX cinema / P65 1level cinemas
Mon.- Fri. / 10am- 4pm (EXCEPT HOLIDAYS)

Ermita
536 -7809- 12

1	LORD OF THE RINGS II
2	THE RING (US VERSION)
3	ONE HOUR PHOTO
4	RING (JAPANESE VERSION)
5	ANALYZE THAT
6	HOT CHICK
7	8 MILE

Metro East - Marcos hway
682- 8193 / 8280

1	THE RING (US VERSION)
2	LORD OF THE RINGS II
3	ANALYZE THAT
4	HOT CHICK
5	HALF PAST DEAD
6	8 MILE
7	ONE HOUR PHOTO
8	LASTIKMAN

Novaliches
935- 3229 - 30

1	LORD OF THE RINGS II
2	THE RING (US VERSION)
3	HOT CHICK
4	8 MILE
5	ONE HOUR PHOTO
6	ANALYZE THAT
7	TRY SEVENTEEN
8	HALF PAST DEAD

Malabon Citisquare
288-0985 / 288-2575

1	8 MILE
2	LORD OF THE RING II
3	HOT CHICK
4	THE RING (US VERSION)

Star Mills- Sn. Fernando, Pamp.
875- 1927
961- 5318 / 5270

1	8 MILE
2	SWIMFAN
3	HOT CHICK
4	KERIDA
5	THE RING (US VERSION)
6	LORD OF THE RINGS II

Imus
471- 8188 / 875- 3838

1	LORD OF THE RINGS II
2	THE RING (US VERSION)
3	HOT CHICK]
4	ANALYZE THAT
5	ONE HOUR PHOTO
6	TRY SEVENTEEN

Sta. Rosa Laguna

1	LORD OF THE RINGS II
2	THE RING (US VERSION)
3	8 MILE
4	BANGKERO
5	HOT CHICK

Bacolod
441- 0453 / 0459

1	THE RING (US VERSION)
2	8 MILE
3	HALF PAST DEAD
4	SWIMFAN
5	BROTHERHOOD OF THE WOLF
6	LAPU-LAPU

Iloilo
336- 8077 - 78

1	THE RING (US VERSION)
2	HALF PAST DEAD
3	MY BIG FAT GREEK WEDDING
4	UNFAITHFUL CONCUVINE
5	DOUBLE SEDUCTION
6	KERIDA

MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

Carlo Orosa faces exciting year with lead role in new musical, solo album

CARLO Orosa has many reasons to be thankful for these days. The past year has been good to him. As member of the Trumpets board of directors, he handled the summer workshop for children's musical theater. Through this yearly activity, Carlo shares the knowledge and experience he has gained from the big productions he has joined.

Carlo was Tumnus in the widely acclaimed musical "The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe," staged at Meralco Theater last August.

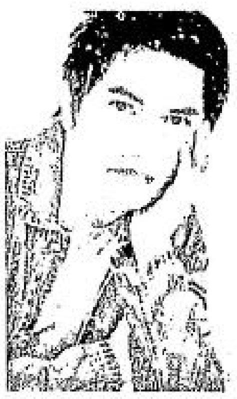
His clear, tenor voice was heard in Ryan Cayabyab's "Amazing Night" concert series at the NBC Tent last June.

Cayabyab himself described Carlo as "an excellent performer with clear, powerful tones coupled with a warm personality, on and off stage."

That personality has shone, not only in the Philippines, but before Filipino communities abroad as well. Carlo performed in a multi-cultural show and brought cheers to OFWs in Hong Kong last year.

He has even gone full circle and renewed ties with his discoverer, Kuh Ledesma, with whom he has done several shows last year: Baguio Country Club, Alabang Town Center and the new Aliw Theater at the CCP Complex.

This year promises to be more exciting for Carlo, as he was asked to play a lead role in Trumpets' big production of "Honk," a musical based on the classic children's tale, "The Ugly Duckling." The curtain will rise for the musical in August at the Meralco Theater, one of Carlo's favorite performance venues, where he has starred in such productions as "Grease" (with Lea Salonga), "Joseph the Dreamer" and "The Little Mermaid."


OROSA. Also wants to make his recording debut this year.

Carlo's outstanding performance as a guest artist was recognized in Lea Salonga's "The Broadway Concert," held in January and June last year.

He has produced records for Ryan Cayabyab and Janno Gibbs.

Carlo wants to turn record producer for his own gospel album and mark his debut effort this year.

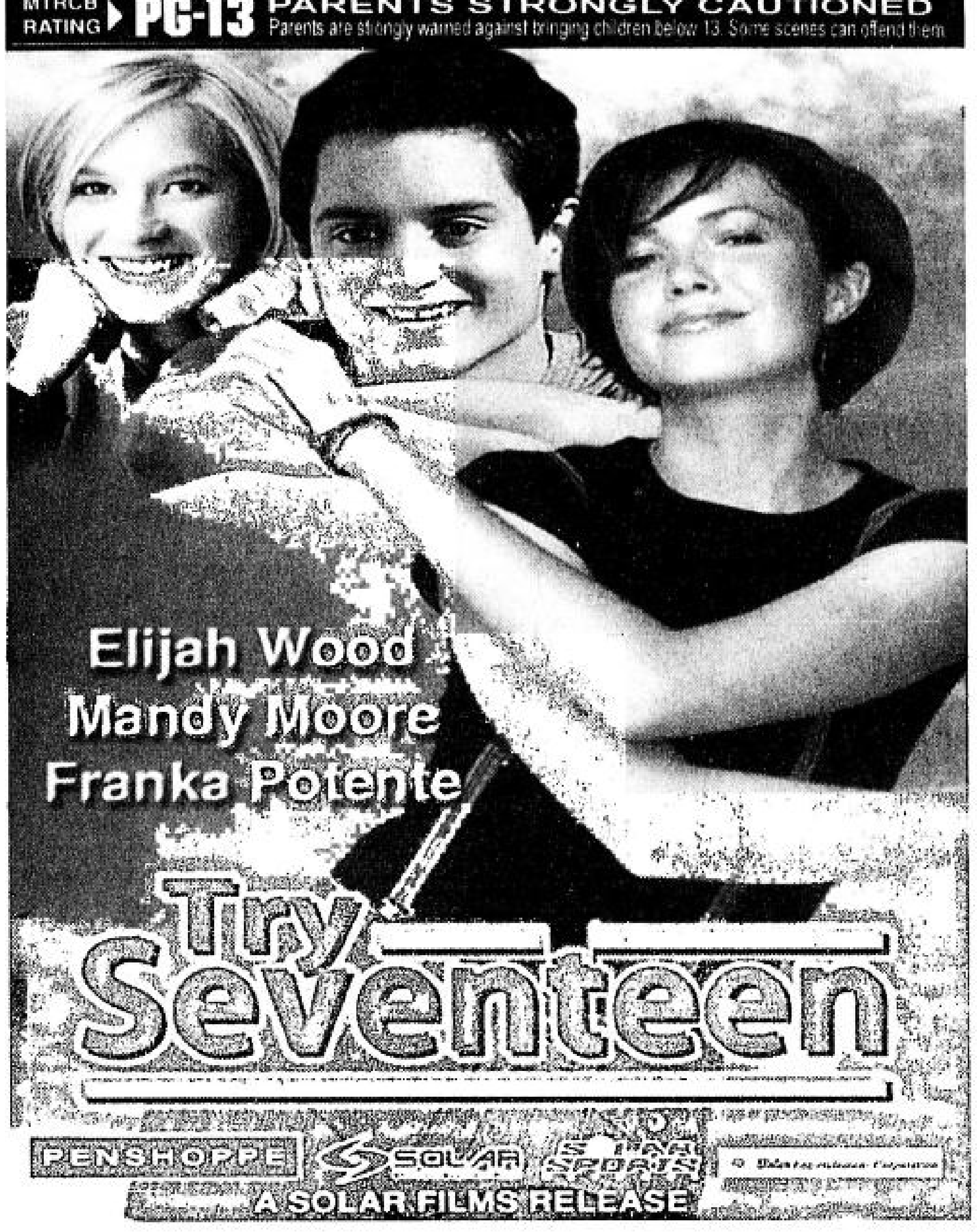
"This will give me freer rein in the album and I want to be able to choose the songs myself," explains Carlo. "I have great ideas and a greater vision for the project."

Album promo tour

SINGER and recording artist Geneva Cruz continues her promo tour at Robinsons malls for her latest self-titled album.

She will be at the Fountain Area of Robinsons Metro East on Jan. 24 and at the Central Atrium of Robinsons Place Novaliches on Jan. 26. All shows are from 4 to 5 p.m.

OPENS TODAY
MTRCB RATING ▸ PG-13 PARENTS STRONGLY CAUTIONED
Parents are strongly warned against bringing children below 13. Some scenes can offend them.



SUSMARYOSEP... THE ORIGINAL IS BACK!
SHOCK ALERT:
YOU PROBABLY WANT TO SEE THIS MOST-TALKED ABOUT HORROR FILM AGAIN AND AGAIN.
YOU ARE WARNED NOT TO ANTICIPATE THOSE SCARY SCENES THAT MAKE YOU SCREAM...
HOLD YOUR BREATH UNTIL THE SCENES ACTUALLY APPEAR ON THE SCREEN THEN LET GO...
AT SUMIGAW KA HANGGAT'T GUSTO MO !!!

MTRCB RATING ▸ PG-13
Experience Fear Worse Than Nightmare!!!
Ring
Circle of Evil
"There's a video. If you see it you have to show it to someone else. After seven days... you die!

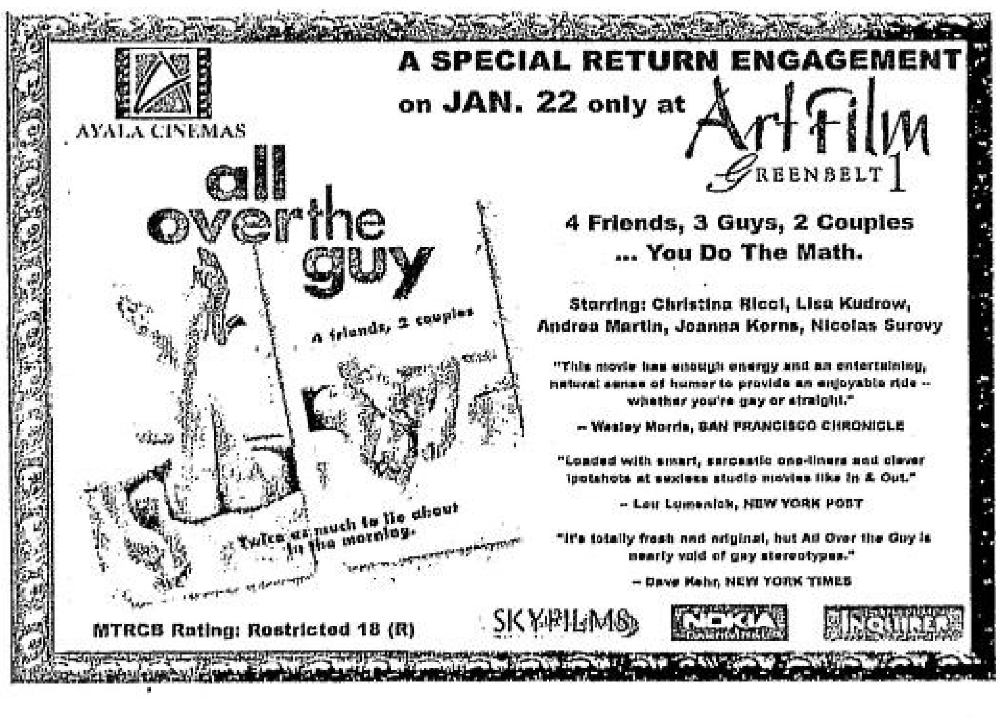
AYALA CINEMAS
OPENS JAN. 29 only at
ArtFilm Greenbelt 1

Off Key, aka Desafinado, is a Spanish comedy made in English featuring an international cast.

It is the story of three operatic tenors who performed all over the world together, until a disastrous performance in Mexico City, where they split for good. Now, they are getting together at the French Villa for the wedding of one of the three tenors to the daughter of another. To further complicate things, the bride's mother is married to the third trio member now. The father of the bride, who has fallen on hard times, hires a hooker to accompany him, and to help with his plot to reunite the trio as performers. The groom-to-be has a son, who isn't really his, and who secretly has the hots for the bride's mother.

Starring:
Danny Aiello, George Hamilton, Joe Mantegna
Anna Galiena & Ariadna Gil

OFF KEY
MTRCB Rating: Parental Guidance 13
SKYFILMS NOKIA INQUIRER


AYALA CINEMAS
A SPECIAL RETURN ENGAGEMENT on JAN. 22 only at ArtFilm Greenbelt 1
all over the guy
4 friends, 2 couples
Twice as much to lie about in the morning.

4 Friends, 3 Guys, 2 Couples
... You Do The Math.

Starring: Christina Ricci, Lisa Kudrow, Andrea Martin, Joanna Korns, Nicolas Surovy

"This movie has enough energy and an entertaining, natural sense of humor to provide an enjoyable ride -- whether you're gay or straight."
-- Wesley Morris, SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

"Loaded with smart, sarcastic one-liners and clever potshots at sexless studio movies like In & Out."
-- Lou Lumenick, NEW YORK POST

"It's totally fresh and original, but All Over the Guy is nearly void of gay stereotypes."
-- Dave Kehr, NEW YORK TIMES

MTRCB Rating: Restricted 18 (R)
SKYFILMS NOKIA INQUIRER

FREE TRIP TO NEW ZEALAND AT AYALA CINEMAS
WIN A FREE TRIP FOR TWO TO NEW ZEALAND AT AYALA CINEMAS WHEN YOU WATCH
THE LORD OF THE RINGS
EXPLORE THE WORLD OF MIDDLE EARTH
A JOURNEY TO NEW ZEALAND
SEE POSTERS AND LEAFLETS FOR MORE DETAILS
Promo runs from Jan 11 to Feb 9, 2003.
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0102. Series of 2003.
Special Thanks to:
PIONEER MANILA BULLETIN BUFFALO

Araneta Center
ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX 7	
Ali 1	8 MILE
Ali 2	THE RING
Ali 3	HOT CHICK
Ali 4	LOD OF THE RINGS 2
Ali 5	TRY SEVENTEEN
Ali 6	ONE HOUR PHOTO
Ali 7	ANAYLYZE THAT
FARMERS PLAZA CINEMAS	
Farmers 1	MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO
Farmers 2	LORD OF THE RINGS 2
ARANETA COLISEUM	
JAN 22, 24	2003 WORLD SLASHER CUP
FEB 3 & 5	NCA 7 COCK DERBY
FEB 15	ABBA TRIBUTE CONCERT
ELEPHANT WORLD	
JAN. 22	10 AM / 3 PM
JAN. 23	10 AM / 3 PM
JAN 24	10 AM / 3 PM / 5 PM

POWER PLANT CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

HOT CHICK P13 1:10, 3:20, 5:30, 7:40, 9:50	8 MILE P13 12:50,3:10,5:30, 7:50,10:10	ANALYZE THAT P13 1:30,3:40,5:50, 8:00,10:10
ONE HOUR PHOTO R18 1:20,3:30,5:40, 7:50,10:00	THE RING P13 11:20,2:40, 6:00,9:20	LORD OF THE RINGS "TWO TOWERS" GP 12:00,3:20,6:40,10:00

MATINEE P80.00 - FREE SEATING - SCREENINGS BEFORE 5 PM - MON TO FRI

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	ALIAS BOMBA QUEEN / EROTIC DIARIES
ODEON	BANGKERO
ODEON-2	PAKAWALANG PUSO / APOY SA MAGDAMAG
ROBEN	MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	FRAILTY / BALLISTIC
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	THE TOUCH / BALLISTIC
CORONET B	DOUBLE SEDUCTION
QUEZON-1	MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO
REMAR	MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO
REMAR-2	BANGKERO
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	BANGKERO
B	MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	THE LORD OF THE RING
CINEMA-2	ANALYZE THAT
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-6401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	BANGKERO
CINEMA-2	KERIDA
CINEMA-3	SPIRIT WARRIORS 2
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	LORD OF THE RINGS 2
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	DIE ANOTHER DAY
CINEMA-6	LASTIKMAN
CINEMA-7	DEKADA '70
CINEMA-8	MANO PO
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	LORD OF THE RINGS 2
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	LORD OF THE RINGS 2
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	LORD OF THE RINGS 2
CINEMA-12	HALF PAST DEAD
CINEMA-14	HEAVEN
CINEMA-15	RING
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
CINEMA 1	DIE ANOTHER DAY
CINEMA 2	BAHID
CINEMA 3	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA 4	CHANGING LANES
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARAÑAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

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a landmark reinvented!
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX
NOW SHOWING

CINEMA 1	LORD OF THE RINGS 2 11:00, 2:40, 6:20, 10:00 GP
CINEMA 2	THE RING 11:20, 1:40, 4:00, 6:20, 8:40 P13

TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.
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MUSIC MUSEUM
JAN 24, 2003 Have I Told You Today That I Love You ? 8:00 PM
w/ BITUIN ESCALANTE & PARA ISIDRO
FOR INQUIRIES & RESERVATION PLS. CALL 721-6726 OR 721-0635

MTRCB RATING ▸ PG-13
Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult.
Parents are strongly cautioned not to bring children below 13 years old to watch this movie.
THE NO.1 FILM THAT RANG UP US$130 MILLION IN THE BOX OFFICE IS NOW HERE!
DREAMWORKS PICTURES

BEFORE YOU DIE, YOU SEE
THE RING
NOW SHOWING

ENTERTAINMENT

E-mail: pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph
Editor Louie C. Camino

STARS VS VAT

Where was Recto when they needed him most?

By Marinel R. Cruz

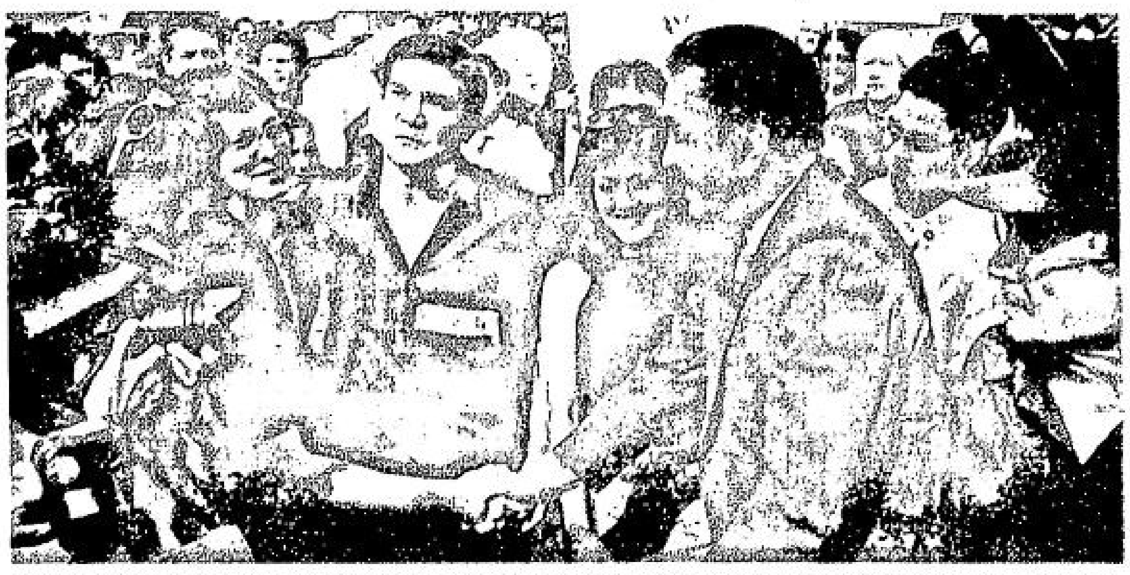
THERE WOULD be less movies and concerts. Stars would be forced to dismiss their drivers and other helpers. Doctors, lawyers and other professionals would have to raise their fees. The biggest loser, however, is the public, which would feel the heavy weight of the tax-paying burden.

But where was Sen. Ralph Recto, whose wife is "star for all seasons" Vilma Santos, when his show biz colleagues needed him most?

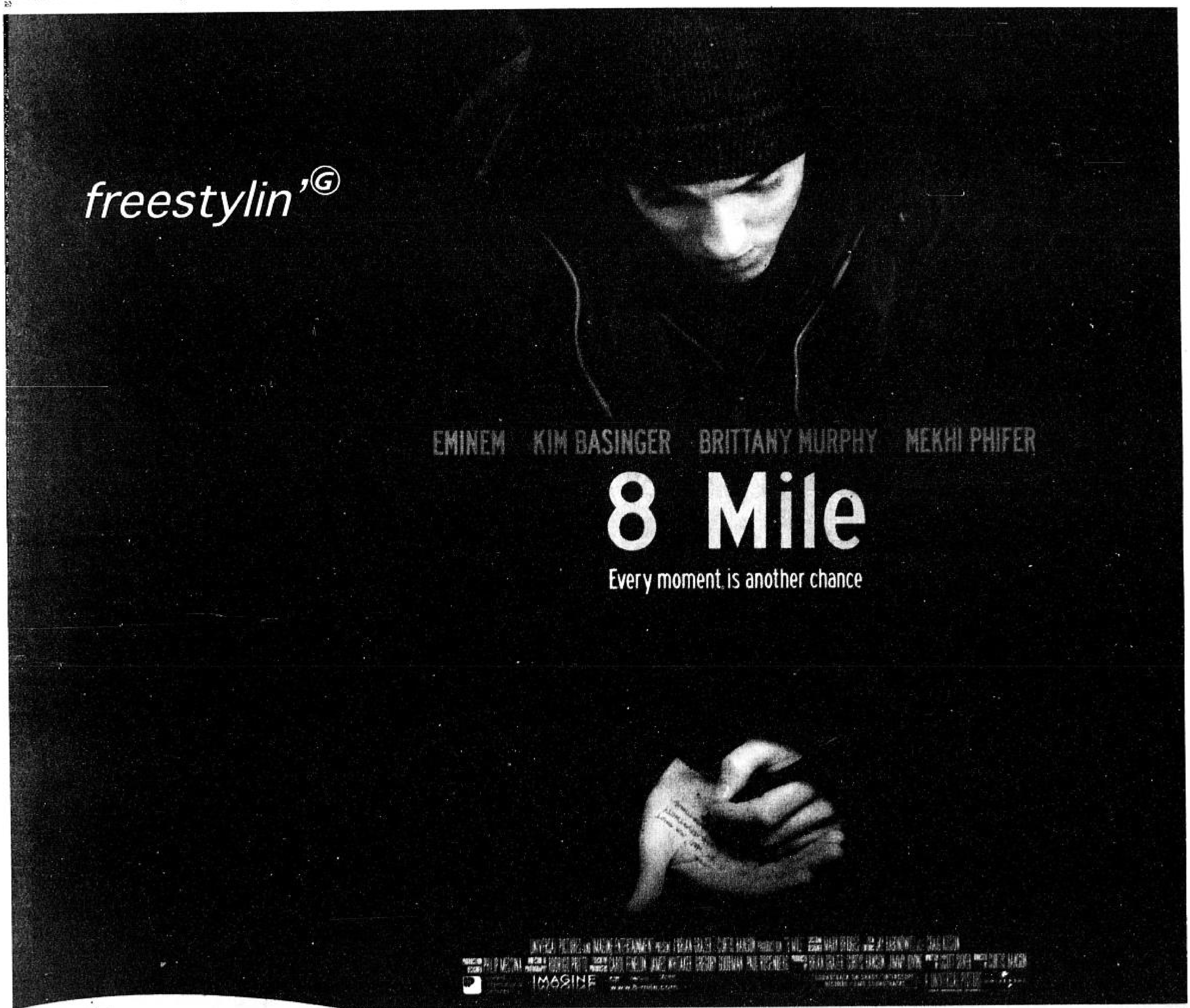
Show biz stars and other professionals—doctors, lawyers, accountants and athletes—painted this scenario as they warned of the effects of imposing an additional 10 percent value added tax (VAT) on them. The stars and their fellow professionals got together in a rare show of unity during a protest march that ended at the Senate last Monday.

The stars were led by the "kings"—Dolphy of comedy and Fernando Poe Jr. of rapid-fire action.

WHERE/ A28



IN SUPPORT OF THE STARS. Sen. Ramon Revilla Sr. and Ilocos Norte Rep. Imee Marcos meet up with the show biz stars in Monday's rally (from left) Aga Muhlach, Tirso Cruz III, Edu Manzano and Dolphy. JESS YUSON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EMINEM KIM BASINGER BRITTANY MURPHY MEKHI PHIFER
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Every moment is another chance
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myGlobe MovieMania

Dawgs and Playas! Bounce to the beat.
Download these slammin' 8 Mile tones now!

RINGTONES /POLYTONES

SONG	ARTIST	KEYWORD
You're All I Need	Method Man & Mary J. Blige	allineed
Bad Meets Evil	Eminem	badmeets
C.R.E.A.M.	Wu Tang Clan	cream
Drug Ballad	Eminem	drugballd
The Way I Am	Eminem	dwayiam
Survival of the Fittest	Mobb Deep	fittest
Marshall Mathers	Eminem	marshallm
Shimmy Shimmy Ya	Ol' Dirty Bastard	shimmyya
Shook Ones	Mobb Deep	shookone
Under The Influence	Eminem	underthe

Opens January 22, 2003
MTRCB Rating PG-13

CAUTION TO PARENTS: The movie contains scenes with offensive language which young audiences may find disturbing. Parents are strongly warned not to bring children 13 years and below.

Check out the latest flicks on myGlobe:
- For movie schedule, call *5200 (toll-free).
- To reserve seats at the Ayala Cinemas, text SURESEATS to 2333.
- Rates: P2.00 for Plan and P2.50 for Prepaid per info requested.

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Select What's New then click on 8 Mile polytones. Cost per download is ₱20.00 each.

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Toshiba to move aircon factory to RP

By Gil Cabacungan Jr. and Margie Espino

TOSHIBA Corp of Japan is set to move its manufacturing facility for window room airconditioners from Thailand to the Philippines.

This is part of the alliance struck between Concepcion-Carrier Airconditioning Co. and Toshiba to distribute the Japanese firm's white-line appliances—air-conditioners, refrigerators, and washing machine—in the Philippines.

CCAC chief operating officer Raul Joseph Concepcion said the transfer may happen "sometime next year depending on the negotiations."

He said mechanics for the move were still being worked out but stated that it would involve the entry of much-needed foreign investments in the Philippines.

"It will also require substantial investments on our part," Concepcion said.

"Once Toshiba comes in the Philippines, we will become the largest window room maker in Southeast Asia," he added.

The facility will produce 300,000 to 350,000 units a year, one third or 100,000 of which will be exported to various countries.

Concepcion said the move of Toshiba will increase their employment by about 20 percent from the current 700 to 800.

Concepcion said the alliance was made possible with Concepcion Industries' partnership with Carrier Corp. which has merged with Toshiba.

In 1997, Carrier took over the air-conditioner business of Concepcion Industries Inc., the Philippines' leading air-conditioner maker, which retained a 49 percent in the merged entity. The Concepcion family opted to tie up with a strong foreign partner to ensure the survival of the air-conditioner business in an increasingly globalized market.

Concepcion said the relationship of Carrier with Toshiba and their own tie-up with the US firm gave them the opportunity to distribute Toshiba airconditioners. However they felt that to make it more viable, they needed more than just one product line of Toshiba. Thus they agreed to distribute the white line also.

Connecticut-based Carrier Corp., the world's leading air-conditioner and refrigerator maker, and Toshiba merged their separate air-conditioner businesses in 1999 to create a $1.1 billion company—Toshiba Carrier Corp. (TCC).

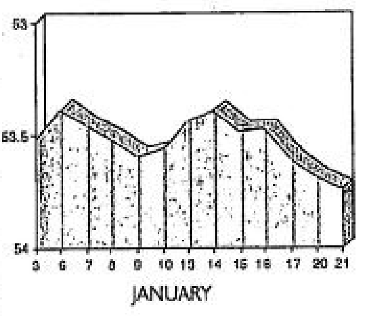
Carrier owns 40 percent of TCC's combined Japanese air-conditioning operation and majority of all operations outside of Japan. TCC is currently handling the global distribution and heating, ventilating, air-conditioning, compressor and cold chain (HVAC) product development of the two firms.

Carrier has since made the Philippines its manufacturing hub for the Asia-Pacific region where it churns out an estimated 200,000 units. Its overseas markets include India, Guam, Thailand, Hong Kong, Korea and Taiwan.

Concepcion-Carrier gets the majority of its parts requirements from local sources such as metallic parts, hot rolled coils, insulators, solvents and carton boxes. Other inputs such as aluminum finstock, air filters, compressors and accessories, and terminal blocks would be imported from Australia, Taiwan, Korea and Japan.

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P53.74 = $1

As of 5 p.m., Jan. 21, 2003

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GOLD: $355.80-355.30

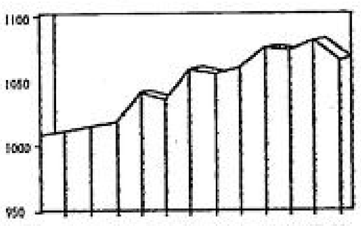
per ounce Hong Kong, Jan. 21, 2003

STOCK MARKET

Shares end lower

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX

JANUARY



(See stock market report on Page B4)

STOCKS closed marginally weaker for a second straight session yesterday in light turnover as the market grappled for cues with the Dow Jones closed on Monday for Martin Luther King holiday.

Traders said investors were waiting for domestic and external developments as well as corporate earnings results for 2002 before building up their positions in the market.

"I think it's technical (selling), we gained more than 2 percent last week, and we saw major resistance at the 1,080 level," said Oliver Plana, head of sales at Asiasec Equities Inc.

"It reflects the fact that investors are still trying to weigh their options, given the high uncertainty with the Middle East situation." The Philippine stock index slid 6.63 points or 0.62 percent to end at 1,060.07 points, shaving the market's gains so far this year to 4.09 percent. Prior to Monday's decline, the index had risen to its highest finish in over three months.

Turnover narrowed to P154.38 million from P166.57 million on Monday. Losers were in a two-to-one majority.

Capping the market's loss was Manila Electric "B," which gained 50 centavos, or 4 percent, at P13 on expectations the country's largest power distributor may soon be able to raise prices due to an increase in the cost of purchased power.

The government is also expected to decide next month on the utility firm's rate unbundling plan, which is expected to lead to higher electricity prices, traders said.

Traders said the market was likely to continue trading sideways for the rest of the week. The expected release of the 2002 budget deficit figure today was unlikely to cause much movement in the market, they said. *Reuters*

Budget deficit for 2002 balloons to ₱213B

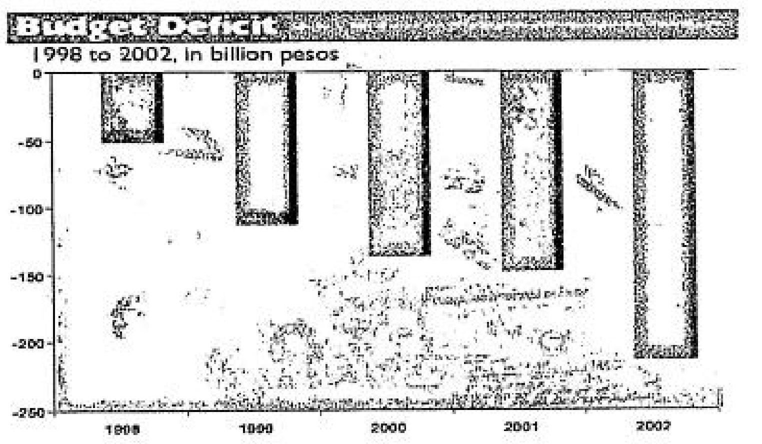
By Clarissa S. Batino

OVERSPENDING and poor revenue collection led to a budget deficit of P213 billion in 2002, exceeding the previous year's P147 billion by 45 percent or P66 billion.

The deficit in 2002 was also P83 billion more than the original target of P130 billion, but P10 billion lower than the final revised target of P223 billion.

The budget gap in December matched the P13 billion of the previous month's. The Department of Finance would make the official announcement on the 2002 budget performance today.

The country's chronic deficit problem had prompted Standard & Poor's and Fitch Ratings to downgrade their rating outlook on the Philippines' foreign currency borrowings late last year. Moody's Investors Service downgraded its outlook on the country's local currency borrowings early this month.



Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin said that expenditures ranged from P60 billion to P65 billion in December. "There was a slight excess in spending but it should have been cushioned by higher collection," she said.

Spending should have been kept at P55 billion but the budget chief said the government had to release funds to 1.5 million workers waiting for their cash gift last month.

Revenues continued to improve in December. The bureaus of Internal Revenue and Customs said they exceeded their targets for the month.

Revenue Commissioner Guillermo Parayno said the bureau collected P37.6 billion in December against a target of P37.5 billion. Customs Commissioner Antonio Bernardo said his agency collected P10.8 billion against a target of P9 billion.

The BIR and Customs collected P393.5 billion and P96.84 billion in 2002 against original targets of P447.6 billion and P115.1 billion.

The revenue and expenditure figures, however, have to be vali-

BUDGET/ B4

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Rationale:

Executives are now looking at the Internet and Technology for expansion of their businesses. Key concerns include finding the time and the energy to pore over all materials and information about the IT businesses, scanning for opportunities across IT segments and across countries, and determining business models suitable for local countries and for export.

On a global, regional and local perspective, this program aims to provide an overview of the IT Industry to show the structure, dynamics, major players and major product offerings. It also encourages participants to map out key success factors and trends, opportunities and threats in the new economy. Third, the program encourages participants to determine the e-potential of their business, the potential market (its readiness and barriers to customer usage). Business models from US, Japan, Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong, India and China will be examined for key learnings.

The Course aims to provide a discussion on the various technologies available in the market. It also tackles the appropriateness or inappropriateness of technology in implementing e-commerce requirements. The technology overview will assist the top manager in overcoming fears of technical jargon and provide a working knowledge and understanding of the available technologies E-commerce marketing and implementation challenges will be tackled and appropriate solutions discussed.

In essence, the program provides an "understanding of business issues in e-business and explores how technology impacts and shapes them".

RECOMMENDED FOR:

CEOs, Directors, Executives and Non-IT Practitioners

Program Benefits:

- Gain an understanding of the Industry and e-commerce to determine the playing field
- Overcome the fear of technology - a top manager need not be a technology expert
- Gain an appreciation on how to serve the global marketplace
- Understand the key elements of speed, cost and alliances as major determinants in an e-commerce strategy
- Learn how to create sustainable barriers to entry, particularly when first mover advantage is no longer enough in a global marketplace
- Learn how to create cost savings in choosing an e-commerce technology
- Become an e-commerce champion in the organization
- Gain an understanding that the internet is not a "cash generator" but an extension of the distribution channel.

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LTDI buyback nearly done

By Elena R. Torrijos

LA TONDEÑA Distillers Inc. said yesterday it has nearly completed its shares buyback program.

In a statement sent to the Securities and Exchange Commission, La Tondeña assistance corporate secretary Rosabel Balan said La Tondeña bought 3,000 of its own shares at P35.50 each in line with its plan to acquire an additional 5 percent of its total outstanding shares.

La Tondeña has already acquired 161,459,341 shares equivalent to 4.99 percent of the company, Balan said.

Several large companies are buying back their shares to prop up their share prices, which have been adversely affected by the loss of investor confidence in the stock market.

La Tondeña is a subsidiary of San Miguel Corp.

It absorbed powdered juice maker Sugarland Beverage Corp. and bottled water maker Metro Bottled Water Corp., as well as SMC Juice Inc., two years ago.

It later sold these companies to The Coca-Cola Co. and San Miguel for $141 million.

The juice and water businesses were then transferred to Coca-Cola Bottlers Philippines Inc., owned jointly by San Miguel and Coca-Cola.

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$33.6-M ARMM loan signed

THE GOVERNMENT and the World Bank signed yesterday in Davao a $33.6-million social loan for the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

The government is set on using the ARMM Social Fund for Peace and Development Project (ASFP) to "foster lasting development in ARMM by reducing poverty and supporting activities that will promote a peaceful and safe environment in the conflict-affected areas."

The ASFP loan agreement was signed by World Bank country director Robert Vance Pulley and Finance Undersecretary Juanita Amatong.

New EO to spur shipping

A NEW Malacañang order is expected to cut shipping costs that, in turn, can result in lower prices of commodities.

Executive Order 164 lowers the rates of import duties on some equipment and goods that the local shipping industry uses.

Tariffs of signaling flares, life harnesses, radar and radio navigational equipment, and warships and life boats will now just be taxed 1 percent.

Iron or steel chains and water tube boilers will be taxed 7 percent, while equipment for scaffolding, shuttering, propping or pit-propping and intake air filters for internal-combustion engines will have a tariff of 10 percent.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Tuesday, January 21, 2003)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
Banks & Financial Services					
Banks					
Bank of the Phil. Islands	37	37.5	37	37	283,700
China Banking Corp.	630	630	630	630	110
Citystate Savings Bank	14.75	14.75	14.75	14.75	2,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	27	27	27	27	1,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	30.5	31	30.5	30.5	80,200
Security Bank Corp.	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	181,100
Union Bank of the Phil.	17	17	17	17	15,000
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	100,000
Filipino Fund, Inc.	0.32	0.33	0.31	0.33	320,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1240	1240	1240	1240	1,650
Sun Life Financial Serv.	105	1030	1005	1030	7,150
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	14	14	13.75	13.75	29,800
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.42	0.42	0.41	0.41	110,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	520	520	500	515	3,370
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.026	0.026	0.026	0.026	3,200,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.015	0.016	0.015	0.016	8,600,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	10,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	10,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	320	322.5	320	320	105,580
Ivantage Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	2,040,000
Philweb Corp.	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	200,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	9	9	8.9	9	606,000
Manila Electric Co. B	12.5	13.25	12.5	13	1,581,400
Petron Corp.	1.64	1.68	1.64	1.64	2,189,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.93	0.93	0.93	0.93	10,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.66	1.66	1.66	1.66	54,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	76,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Union Cement Corp.	0.44	0.44	0.43	0.43	600,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.18	2.2	2.18	2.2	62,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	17	17	17	17	227,200
La Tondeña Distillers,Inc.	35	35	35	35	16,100
San Miguel Corp. A	57	57.5	57	57.5	122,100
San Miguel Corp. B	63	63	62.5	63	244,300
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	30,000
Ayala Corp.	4.4	4.45	4.35	4.35	919,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.34	2.36	2.34	2.34	703,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.155	0.155	300,000
A. Soriano Corp.	0.53	0.56	0.53	0.56	3,820,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	2,000,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	50,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.15	0.16	0.145	0.16	2,280,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	9.7	9.8	9.6	9.6	199,000
Ionics Inc.	0.71	0.71	0.7	0.7	1,960,000
J.G. Summit Holdings, Inc.	1.32	1.34	1.32	1.32	130,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	2,000,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.6	0.6	0.59	0.6	1,700,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.17	0.17	0.165	0.165	620,000
Music Corp.	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.095	700,000
Philtread Holdings Corp.	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	5,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	3,200,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	200,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Interphil Labs Inc. A	1.94	1.94	1.94	1.94	1,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.6	0.6	0.59	0.6	210,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025	100,000
Pryce Corp.	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	1,000,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	12.25	12.25	12.25	12.25	68,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.32	0.32	0.31	0.31	290,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.27	0.29	0.27	0.27	480,000
Philippine Racing Club	4	4	4	4	2,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp.(PDR)	13.75	13.75	13.5	13.5	17,900
Jollibee Warrants	16.5	16.5	16.5	16.5	122,500
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.1	5.1	5	5	1,443,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	570,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	890,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	0.99	0.99	0.98	0.98	2,020,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	1.94	1.94	1.94	1.94	100,000
SM Development Corp.	1.14	1.14	1.14	1.14	50,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.2	882,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	31,000,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	1	1	1	1	10,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	18,590,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.225	0.225	0.225	0.225	400,000
Omico Corp.	0.0024	0.0024	0.0024	0.0024	6,000,000
OIL					
Pacifica	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	2,000,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	1,000,000
South China Resources Inc.	0.225	0.225	0.225	0.225	10,000

	SHARES	VALUE(P)
Bank & Fin Svc	1,001,910	25,171,400.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	43,557,373	117,081,392.00
PRO	5,955,000	14,347,900.00
Mining	56,000,000	4,309,600.00
OIL	3,010,000	39,250.00
GRAND TOTALS :	109,524,283	160,949,542.00

AVERAGES		
Bank & Fin Svc	384.04	DOWN 2.21
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,508.00	DOWN 10.41
PRO	458.82	DOWN 0.15
Mining	1,308.61	DOWN 47.28
OIL	1.03	UNCH 0.00
All Shares Index	652.65	UP 0.54
Composite	1,060.07	DOWN 6.63

NO. OF ADVANCES: 14 NO. OF DECLINES: 30 NO. OF UNCHANGED: 32 NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 76
NO. OF TRADES: 1,149

DISCLOSURES

ROXAS Holdings Inc. bought 10,000 ROX shares on Jan. 20 at 90 centavos each pursuant to its buyback program.

* * *

LA TONDEÑA Distillers Inc., in line with its repurchase program, bought 3,000 shares on Jan. 20. This brings the number of shares that it has bought back to 330,026,932.

* * *

PURSUANT to its share-buyback program, **Interphil Laboratories Inc.** bought 162,000 ILI shares and 54,000 ILIB shares on Jan. 20.

* * *

PRUDENTIAL Bank has approved the appointment of Delfin Lazaro as a member of its board effective immediately. It has also elected vice president Manolo Hilario as treasurer.

* * *

CITYPLANS Inc., a subsidiary of **Cityland Development Corp.**, has invested, together with **Cityland Inc.**, in Pasig Royal Mansion, an eight-storey commercial and residential condominium along Evangelista St., Santolan, Pasig City.

* * *

THE BOARD of **Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co.** has accepted the resignation of president and chief operating officer Artemio Disini effective Feb. 28. He will continue to serve as a director. He shall be replaced by senior vice president and chief financial officer Bryan Yap effective March 1.

* * *

THE MANAGEMENT of **William, Gothong and Aboitiz Inc.** has said it is not aware of any material reason why its share price increased from P1 to P1.50. ***Compiled by Armin Adina, PDI Research***

CURRENCIES

Jan. 21, 2003 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	0.936593	1.000000	53.709000
Japan	Yen	0.007954	0.008493	0.456200
United Kingdom	Pound	1.511380	1.613700	86.670200
Hongkong	Dollar	0.120095	0.128225	6.886800
Switzerland	Franc	0.684543	0.730887	39.255200
Canada	Dollar	0.610118	0.651423	34.987300
Singapore	Dollar	0.540664	0.577267	31.004400
Australia	Dollar	0.553444	0.590912	31.737300
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.484396	2.652590	142.468000
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.249752	0.266660	14.322000
Brunei	Dollar	0.539108	0.575606	30.915200
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000106	0.000113	0.006100
Thailand	Baht	0.021934	0.023419	1.257800
UAE	Dirham	0.255000	0.272264	14.623000
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.067700	57.345100
ArgentinaPeso	0.289967	0.309598	16.628200	
Brazil	REAL	0.277427	0.296209	15.909100
Denmark	Kroner	0.134421	0.143521	7.708400
India	Rupee	0.019569	0.020894	1.122200
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.246505	0.263193	14.135800
Mexico	New Peso	0.088316	0.094295	5.064500
New Zealand	Dollar	0.516058	0.550995	29.593400
Norway	Kroner	0.137191	0.146479	7.867200
Pakistan	Rupee	0.016162	0.017256	0.926800
South Africa	Rand	0.106431	0.113636	6.103300
Korea	Won	0.000798	0.000852	0.045800
Sweden	Kroner	0.108822	0.116189	6.240400
Syria	Pound	0.018186	0.019417	1.042900
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.027290	0.029138	1.565000
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000527	0.000563	0.030200

US hand

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

IN THE spooky underside of diplomatic lobbying, silence and self-effacement have always been the behavioral guideposts.

Apparently, not anymore.

Two years since the ouster of you-know-who, the US Agency for International Development even publicizes its role in helping unmask corrupt deals of the Erap administration.

USAID makes no bones about funding the website as well as the various advocacies of the "Transparent Accountable Governance" project, including the investigative reports of the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism.

The website, www.tag.org.ph, even says USAID had commissioned PCIJ for a series of stories, including "six print stories and four TV segments" on local corruption.

TAG did not say what those PCIJ stories were, but the same website lists the PCIJ-generated stories, including 13 (that number again!) Erap-related stories out of the 14 projects churned out by the PCIJ in the tumultuous 2000.

For 2001, the website lists only four PCIJ stories—one of which was about a giant US defense contractor "squatting" in Clark—and only one story project for 2002.

In addition to the PCIJ, the "generous support" that the TAG receives from USAID is in turn funneled to the Social Weather Stations, the University of the Philippines' Philippine Center for Policy Studies, the Makati Business Club and the Asia Foundation.

The funding support for these organizations was designed to "focus business and public attention on how particular areas of corruption affect the conduct of business and economic growth in the Philippines, and build consensus on a concrete agenda for counter-corruption reform."

USAID disclosed that it has a $101-million kitty for this and other Philippine projects for the fiscal years 1995 to 2004.

Espiritu's gambit

AND speaking of the dark Erap years, now it can be told that his ex-finance secretary, Edgardo B. Espiritu, was prepared to let go even his own home after Espiritu was unceremoniously shown out of Malacañang.

Despite the stiff 16-18 percent interest rate at that time, July 2000, Espiritu and his wife Lydia mortgaged their penthouse unit at the Ritz Tower plus about 2.1 hectares of raw land in Montalban, Rizal, for P94 million.

The thrift bank had initially balked at lending the politically incorrect Espiritu, but eventually relented, especially after being assured that the titles to the property were free from any encumbrances.

The three-year loan had ballooned to P105 million by June 2002, but Espiritu, whose fortunes have changed, was now able to waive the penalty charges, reduce interest rate down to 12 percent, and, even better, propose to make a P1-million monthly installment on the principal.

The loan matures in June with a balloon payment for the balance.

Playboy judge

NOW that the Supreme Court has ordered marathon hearings on the so-called "hoodlum" judges of the Baguio Regional Trial Court, startling details have been coming out that betray the Baguio judges' honorable aura.

For instance, a judge old enough to be a grandfather checked in one midnight at the Baguio Country Club with a woman not his wife and stayed in the management's very own penthouse for "two nights and three days," according to the testimony of a security supervisor.

The security guard, who has since been fired by the club, even claimed that he helped the amorous judge and his companion with their luggage.

The female companion turned out to be a student of the judge, who teaches part-time in a local school, according to the grapevine. The judge, in the meantime, has fathered a child with another woman and even had the courage, some say foolishness, to acknowledge in the child's birth certificate that he is, indeed, the biological donor.

If you think this is scandalous behavior, wait 'til you hear the alibi of the so-called hungry judge.

Heard through the grapevine

INSULAR Life's Vicente Ayllon has assumed the chairmanship of the financially beleaguered Asian Hospital.

Two of Tonyboy Cojuangco's nominees in the board, including businessman-golfer Leonides Gonzales, have agreed to step down, apparently to pave the way for a hoped-for increased stake of the insurance company in the country's newest, world-class medical facility.

(Cocktales may be reached by e-mail at cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or at cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.)

BSP urged to go after erring investment firms

By Elena R. Torrijos

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Commission has urged the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to do its part in running after psuedo-investment firms that were defrauding the public of billions of pesos in savings.

"While we have gone after these companies for violation of the Securities Regulation Code on mere lack of registration of investment contracts by classifying them (contracts) as securities, we believe the BSP should also do its part by going after these companies for engaging in banking/quasi-banking activities without BSP license," SEC Chair Lilia Bautista said in a letter to BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura dated Jan. 13.

The SEC has been aggressively investigating and shutting down companies or groups for fraud and violations of the country's securities laws. It has closed down alleged psuedo-investment firms Multitel., Glasgow and MMG Holdings.

In her letter to Buenaventura, Bautista asserted that the BSP should look at the activities of companies soliciting investments from the public given that Section 6 of the General Banking Law of 2000 was very clear that the BSP also had jurisdiction over such firms.

Section 6 of the General Banking Law provides that the "Monetary Board shall determine whether a person or entity is performing banking or quasi-banking functions without BSP authority. The MB may, through the appropriate supervising and examining department of the BSP, examine, inspect or investigate the books and records of such person or entity.

"Persons or entities found to be performing banking or quasi-banking functions without BSP authority shall be subject to appropriate sanctions under the New Central Bank Act and other applicable laws."

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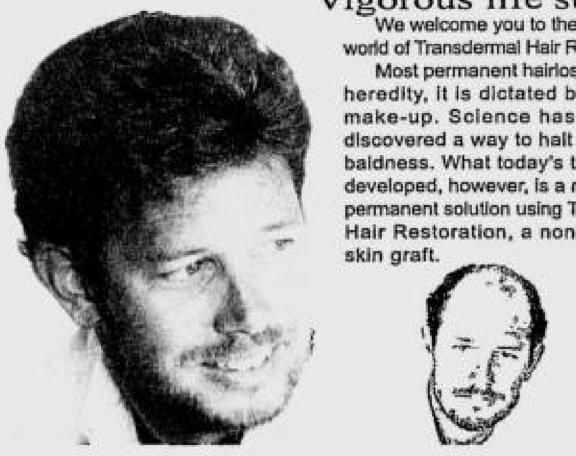
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Asian Hospital junks Cojuangco buy-in bid

By Doris C. Dumlao

GARCIA

ASIAN Hospital Inc. has junked a buy-in proposal from the group of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. chair Antonio "Tonyboy" Cojuangco in favor of a P300-million fresh equity infusion from existing stockholders.

In an interview with the INQUIRER, Asian Hospital president Jorge Garcia said the P4-billion medical center in Filinvest, Alabang, had gone past its financial difficulties and was on stable footing to continue its vision of providing world-class health care to Filipinos and foreign patients.

Garcia confirmed that Cojuangco's group earlier offered to buy out the stake held by a key stockholder, Vista Medical Management Inc. (VMMI), and to bring in P400 million in new equity, but that the deal was aborted.

VMMI is the management organization for Healthway Medical Clinics owned by JP Morgan Partners and Capital Land Ltd., one of the top 20 publicly listed companies in Singapore.

"They have bid to buy the VMMI share but nothing was inscribed in stone. We evaluated their proposal and actually, we went as far as really trying to get the deal done because we felt at that time it was very good for the hospital," Garcia said.

The original proposal, he explained, was for Cojuangco's group to infuse P400 million in new equity to the hospital.

"But part of that will be used to pay off other loans particularly (to the) IFC (International Finance Corp.) so there will only be P150 million left and so analyzing the whole situation, we felt that the deal was not good enough and that's the reason why we decided to raise the equity ourselves," he stressed.

Capitalized at P2 billion, Asian Hospital's existing shareholder base prior to the P300 million in new infusion was broken down roughly as follows: small investors made up mostly Filipino-American doctors (35 percent); VMMI (31 percent); Insular Life (12 percent); Unilab group (10 percent); Evelyn Singson (2-3 percent), and Filinvest group (7 percent).

"Many people are interested to invest," he said. "We might need additional investments later on but for our immediate needs for the year or so, we were able to raise the money to continue our operations," he said.

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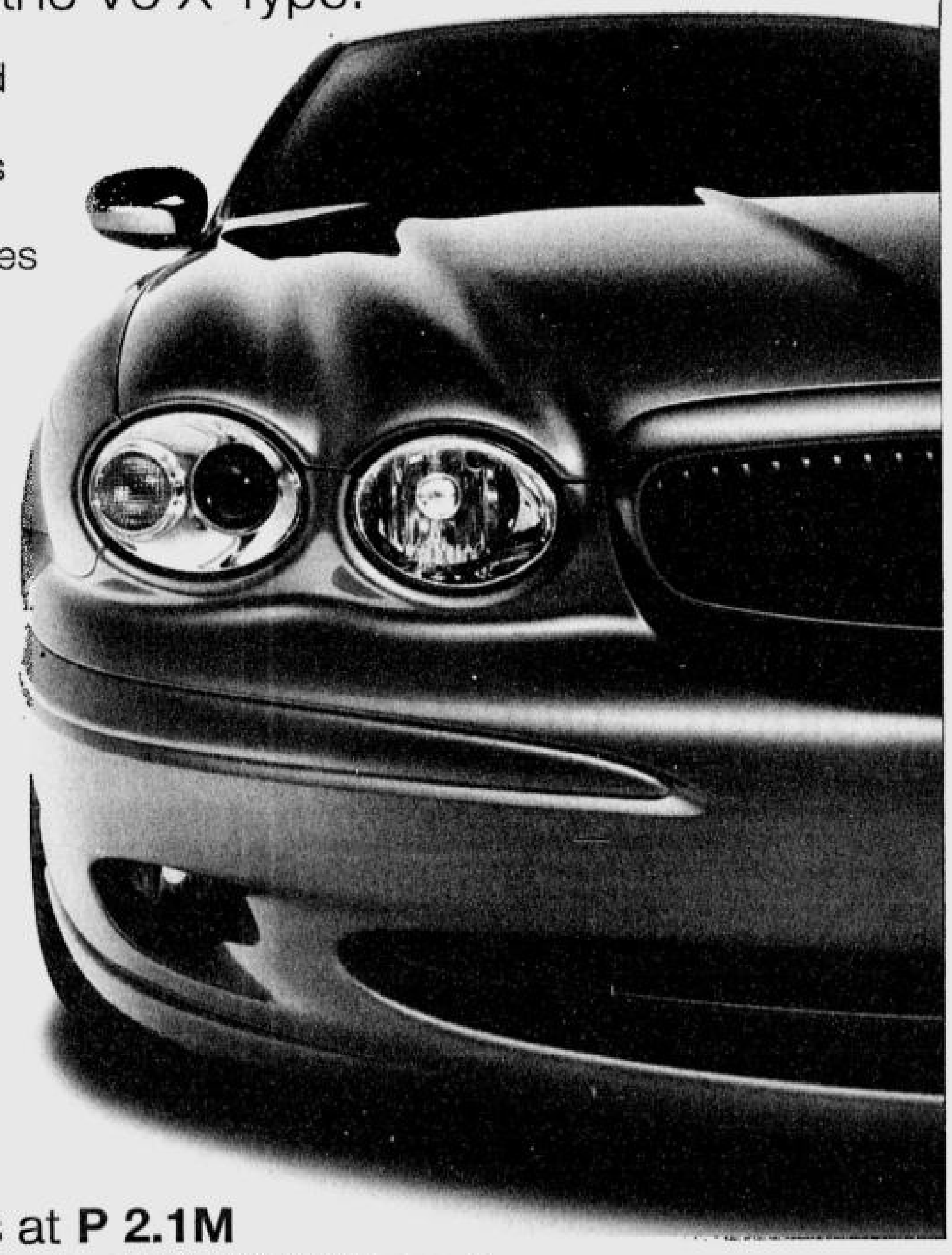
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BSP sees January inflation rate at 2.7%-2.9%

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas yesterday said higher fuel prices and a sustained strong consumer spending would likely push the inflation rate in January to between 2.7 and 2.9 percent.

"I think inflation in January would be higher than December but still below 3 percent," said BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura. The rate in December dipped to a 15-year-low of 2.6 percent.

Buenaventura said the higher oil prices in the previous months and "a spillover of the Christmas spending" this month might push consumer prices up.

Aside from fuel, prices of milk and electricity are also expected to go up. Milk manufacturers have advised the public of a 5-percent increase in prices while the energy department warned the public of upcoming increases in power rates.

Crude oil prices rose to an average of $27.3 per barrel in January versus $25.73 per barrel the previous month. As of Jan. 20, crude oil was selling for $28.48 per barrel despite the decision of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries to increase production by 1.5 million barrels.

Buenaventura had warned of an uptick in consumer prices in the coming months in view of uncertainties caused by the US-Iraq conflict and the impending El Niño dry spell although he was confident the full-year average would remain within the target of 4.5-5.5 percent.

The BSP chief said the first half would be a very challenging period for the economic managers due to the combined pressure of the brewing Middle East war, the drought that could disrupt farm production and the budget deficit.

"If the first half would not be severe and inflation would range between 4 and 5 percent, then we have a good chance of keeping our policy rates neutral for the rest of the year," said the central bank chief early this month.

He said that if the impact would be worse-than-expected in the first half, the policy-making Monetary Board would have to assess the situation and adjust the overnight tiering first before making any changes in the policy rates.

The BSP governor believed that the inflation rate this year would trend up but it would still average within the target of 4.5 to 5.5 percent from a full-year average of 3.1 percent in 2002.

"We can afford to stay neutral in the first six months, then we will see what will happen in the second half. But the more crucial period is the first half and so if our inflation remains manageable, then we will keep our rates steady for the rest of 2003," Buenaventura added.

Currently at their decade lows, the BSP overnight borrowing rate of 7 percent and lending rate of 9.25 percent have remained unchanged since March 15 last year.

Buenaventura said the economic managers must meet their macroeconomic targets this year, particularly the budget deficit set at P202 billion, otherwise, the government would face the risk of a debt blowout. This, he said, would make borrowing more difficult and affect the country's external payments position.

GMA seeks OK of BIR measure

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo has asked lawmakers to prioritize a bill seeking to create a new revenue authority to replace the Bureau of Internal Revenue and help stamp out corruption in tax administration that cost the government hundred billions of pesos in much needed revenues each year.

The proposed National Authority for Revenue Administration (Nara) measure is one of the "key prescriptions for economic renewal and reform" put forward by the executive department.

Ms Macapagal said she was hoping to see the Nara bill passed by June 6 this year, along with five other legislative measures.

These are the proposed rationalization of motor vehicle tax, indexation of sin taxes, rationalization of the pay scale for the judiciary, creation of a Department of Housing and the anti-terrorism act.

Matsushita making RP global production hub

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

JAPANESE consumer electronic giant Matsushita Electric Industrial Co. Ltd. said it was projecting an increase in its export sales from the Philippines over the next three years in line with its plan to make the country a global production hub.

In a presentation to the Board of Investments, Matsushita said that overseas shipments out of its four Philippine subsidiaries would increase to nearly 60 percent of its total turnover by 2005 from 41 percent last year. Matsushita, which owns the National and Panasonic brands, generates over P40 billion in gross sales yearly. This is expected to jack up the Philippines' share in Matsushita's Asian production currently at 9 percent versus Malaysia's 31 percent share and Singapore's 30 percent share.

Part of Matsushita's export focus in the Philippines was its recent decision to make the country its worldwide production center for window-type air-conditioners.

"The Philippines has a global cost competitiveness over China and Korea in the field of manufacturing," said Matsushita vice chair Masayuki Matsushita in a letter to Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel A. Roxas II to explain the company's decision to shut down its window-type air-conditioner in Malaysia (which would focus on split-type air-conditioners).

Matsushita invested P300 million in its Sta. Rosa, Laguna, factory to expand production of window-type air-conditioners from 100,000 units a year to 250,000 a year making it one of the company's largest air-conditioner factories in the world. At least 35 percent or 89,000 units of the factory's output would be sold in the Philippines with the bulk to be sold in Asean, the US and South America.

Matsushita has gone full circle since it first established a joint venture with Filipinos in 1998 to sell Japan-made appliances to Filipinos.

SM Prime tops Euromoney survey

SM PRIME Holdings Inc. was once again rated by Euromoney Magazine, a European business magazine, the "Best Managed Company in the Philippines," and 2nd Best in the Asia region in the property sector.

Euromoney's seventh Asian company ranking, published in the magazine's December 2002 issue, was based on a survey of market analysts of major banks and research institutes in Asia.

This is the second consecutive year that SM Prime has made it to the "Best Managed Company" survey poll of Euromoney.

SM Prime, in a statement said, the distinction was a reflection of the company's commitment to good corporate governance and shareholder value, as well as a strong track record of transparency and communication to investors.

SM Prime Holdings Inc. has to date 14 malls—eight in Metro Manila and six in the provinces of Cavite and Pampanga in Luzon, Cebu and Iloilo in the Visayas and Davao and Cagayan de Oro in Mindanao.

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DTI adopts precision marketing strategy

ROXAS

TO achieve the government's export growth target of at least 5 percent for 2003, the Department of Trade and Industry is adopting the strategy of precision marketing and micro-management by focusing on specific companies selling specific products geared for specific target consumers, Trade Secretary Manuel Roxas II said.

"We do not expect 2003 to be an easy year. Consumers abroad—in the US, Japan and Europe—are in for a rude awakening as they realize that much of their savings have been depleted as a result of the drastic drop in the value of stocks abroad," Roxas said. "As such, they may just decide to slow down on their spending, something that we did not really see last year."

And yet, pockets of opportunities for the enterprising exporters abound, Roxas added as he cited some of the positive experiences last year.

The export growth of about 9 percent for the whole year of 2002 was achieved despite adverse international market conditions and has demonstrated the importance of the DTI's focused efforts in promoting specific products for specific markets as well as improving the delivery of services and assistance to the country's exporters, Roxas said.

Center of excellence

Some of the best results were seen in the specific programs tailored to fit the needs of the electronics, garments and automotive export sectors. Attention was also given to the canned tuna and fresh fruits exports. These sectors, which represent the country's top three export products, experienced dramatic market recoveries despite strong competition and prevailing adverse market conditions.

Challenged by strong competition from China where a growing number of electronic firms have set up factories, the DTI focused on promoting a healthy business environment through sustained service delivery.

The overall vision is to transform the Philippines into a regional center of excellence in selected electronics industry products and processes and to become the investment location of choice for Filipino and foreign corporations who wish to design, make and sell their products. In pursuit of this aim, a supply chain analysis was conducted in cooperation with 17 electronic companies to identify critical investment areas and gaps that must be addressed to enhance the competitive position of the local players, Roxas said.

Reinforcing confidence

Investments missions were sent to Silicon Valley and Japan to reinforce confidence of parent companies of major electronic companies now operating in the country, establish linkages with key organizations and institutions, and attract new investments. Meanwhile, the DTI is closely monitoring and addressing the specific concerns of the industry such as continued development of infrastructure support like road widening, construction of bridges and interchanges particularly in Cavite, where many of these electronics manufacturers are based.

The DTI pilot-tested the implementation of the Automated Cargo Import Transfer System for the processing and release of import shipments from Naia and for delivery to semiconductor and electronics enterprises operating in the economic zones under Peza. The number of documents required was reduced from 11 to four and are now being processed in one office, the Customs-Peza Clearance Office, consisting of Peza, BOC and PCCI. The need for Peza police escort for export shipments was eliminated. The P300-P500 transshipment fee was also eliminated. Instead, the companies are now required to post a bond.

Automation

In addition, Peza and BOC has successfully pilot-tested the Automated Export Document System (AEDS) in Gateway Business Park and is commencing another pilot run in Laguna Technopark, Roxas cited. The system enables enterprises to electronically lodge export declarations within their premises and, within seconds, generate the Single Administrative Document which replaced four documents previously required. The system also replaced signatures of Peza and BOC officials with an electronic barcode as proof of its authenticity.

The initiatives of the Quick Reaction Team in promoting industrial peace and resolving labor-management disputes have led to fewer cases of complaints specifically in Japanese companies, he added. With their positive experience, the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry has reaffirmed its confidence in the Philippine government's capability to enhance the business environment.

In the case of garments, the country's second biggest export, the DTI and the Garments and Textiles Export Board (GTEB) unveiled the Garments Export Industry Transformation Plan and Assistance Package, a comprehensive incentives package designed to boost the industry's competitiveness in the light of the impending abolition of the export quota system by the end of 2004.

The program was designed in consultation with industry leaders and includes skills and productivity enhancement, relaxation of rules, additional incentives to use the remaining export quota allocation available until 2004 to encourage exporters to upgrade their workers' skills, acquire new technologies, and comply with best practice social standards.

Auto sector

To enhance the viability of the auto parts manufacturing sector, the source of the country's third largest exports, the government adopted measures meant to provide a clear and stable policy framework, create a level-playing field among competitors and provide the appropriate incentives. This is in line with the thrust of the government to develop the Philippines as a regional hub for motor vehicles and auto parts, Roxas said. The plan specifically aims to expand production of CBUs by targeting an annual export and domestic sales of 200,000 to 250,000 by 2007 and increase the exports of auto parts to $2 billion by 2005, he added.

As a result, DTI, together with the Department of Finance, submitted to Congress last October a proposed bill to rationalize the tax system by adopting a simple value-based taxation for automobiles.

Then last December, the President signed an executive order that provided a comprehensive industrial policy and directions for the motor vehicle development program, defined clearly what is covered by the import ban and the specific types of vehicles that will be regulated as well as provided stricter penalties to violators of the ban. Illegally imported vehicles will be subject to outright seizure without redemption.

Budget deficit for 2002 . . .

From page B1

dated by the Bureau of Treasury.

This year, the government said it would keep the deficit at P202 billion or 4.6 percent of the gross domestic product. The P223-billion deficit target in 2002 was equivalent to 5.7 percent of GDP.

The BIR and Customs have assured that unlike in 2002, they would meet their respective targets of P424 billion and P105.6 billion in 2003.

Camacho said the government had been implementing strategies to improve revenue collection. But they should be complemented by legislative measures that Congress must pass to help solve the country's fiscal problems.

The finance chief said that Congress must not give in to the demands of professionals and entertainers to pass a law that would again exempt these taxpayers from the 10-percent VAT. The five-year exemption of professionals from the value-added tax ended in 2002.

The government had computed the P8.658 billion in revenue losses from the VAT exemption to professionals based on the sectors' value-added of P86.576 billion.

Based on data from the National Statistics Office, the P86.576 billion was broken down into P24.951 billion for the medical and health services, P27.672 billion for the legal services, and P33.953 billion for the entertainment services.

Thus, the 10-percent VAT due from the medical, legal, and entertainment sectors should be P2.495 billion, P2.767 billion, and P3.395 billion.

Mizuho warns of $16.5-B loss, plans capital raising

TOKYO—Japanese mega-bank Mizuho warned Tuesday it would lose $16.5 billion in the current year and announced a massive capital raising as it speeds up the write-off of bad loans.

The expected net loss of 1.95 trillion yen in the year to March is almost nine times larger than the 220-billion-yen loss it earlier forecast.

Mizuho Holdings Inc., the world's largest bank in terms of assets, pledged to write off 2.03 trillion yen in non-performing loans this financial year, double the 1.04 trillion yen targeted previously.

To help offset the increased write-offs, the troubled bank will raise new capital of one trillion yen, likely through the issue of preferred shares.

Mizuho's full-year loss forecast would be one of the worst ever by a Japanese firm.

Banks' massive share portfolios have been hammered by a slump in the stock market and government pressure for increased bad loan disposals have further eaten into their capital.

The major banks have announced a series of deals to bolster their balance sheets before the fast approaching financial year ends.

US investment bank Goldman Sachs said last week it would pump $1.3 billion into Sumitomo Mitsui Financial Group. In December UFJ Bank announced a 100-billion-yen investment by Merrill Lynch.

Mizuho expects to reduce its NPLs by 500 billion yen from a year earlier to 4.5 trillion yen by the end of March. The NPL balance is forecast to fall further to 3.8 trillion over the following year and to 2.4 trillion in the year to March 2005.

Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi has said he wants to halve the ratio of bad loans at major banks by March 2005. The massive bad loans held by banks are choking off fresh lending and are seen as one of the main causes of Japan's decade-long slump.

"These drastic financial measures will provide financial preparation for our efforts to achieve both corporate revival and full-scale disposal of NPLs from our balance sheet from next fiscal year," Mizuho said in a statement. *AFP*

Silicon Valley salaries shrinking

SAN FRANCISCO—The average salary in Silicon Valley dropped 6 percent from early 2001 to mid-2002, and the US technology hub lost 9 percent of its jobs in the same period.

Average pay in Silicon Valley in mid-2002 was $62,500 a year, after accounting for inflation, according to a survey released Monday by Joint Venture: Silicon Valley Network, a San Jose-based nonprofit group formed to promote the region.

That's far above the nation's average pay of $38,400, but it's a steep drop from the peak of $79,800 in 2000.

Mass layoffs and company closures slashed the region's job market, erasing 127,000 jobs between the first quarter of 2001 and the second quarter of 2002, according to the survey. Losses were concentrated in the software, semiconductor and computer hardware sectors.

The study also chronicled the rapid demographic shift rippling through the region, where more than eight out of 10 residents in 1970 were white. *AP*

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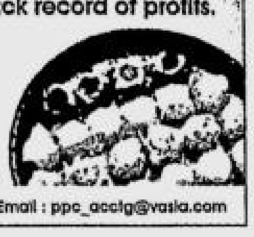

Ford to produce Mondeo luxury cars in China

SHANGHAI—US auto giant Ford Motor Co. said Tuesday it would produce its Mondeo luxury cars in China, the world's fastest growing auto market, in the second half of this year.

"Ford is going to introduce the second product, Mondeo. We will be producing the Mondeo in the second half," Kenneth Hsu, Beijing-based spokesperson for Ford Motor (China), told Reuters.

Hsu said Ford, the world's second largest automaker, was building a new production line at its $98-million joint venture plant with Chinese partner Chongqing Changan Automobile Co. Ltd .

He declined to give details.

Ford is considered a latecomer to the Chinese market compared to its US rival, General Motors Corp., and Germany's Volkswagen AG.

But on Saturday, it launched its Fiesta compact car in China and said would sell 20,000 of them this year and 50,000 in 2004.

Ford executives have also said they plan to introduce a new model each year in China, where the auto market is growing rapidly and becoming increasing competitive with an expanding number of joint ventures by the world's auto giants. *Reuters*

Banks face scandals, bad loans in China

HONG KONG—Banking giants, their sights set on Chinese consumers hungry for house and car loans, are getting started in China by buying stakes in its smaller commercial banks —and walking straight into a landscape of bad loans and financial scandals.

Recent reports that Hong Kong's biggest bank, the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corp., was considering taking a stake in Guangzhou Commercial Bank coincided with news that the Chinese bank has been embroiled in an expensive debacle over misuse of money.

More surprises could be in store as foreign banks hunt Chinese partners. Though the state-owned industry is clearing away a mountain of unpaid debts, the extent of individual banks' troubles is unknown. China requires little public disclosure of their finances and the entirely government-controlled media suppresses unflattering news.

China hopes such deals will bring in foreign money, technology and skills—assets that its banks urgently need. The official China Daily newspaper warned recently that many smaller banks were "on the verge of bankruptcy."

Foreign banks, their business slow elsewhere, seem willing to take the risk, attracted by China's seemingly huge market and growing populace of urban consumers. Economic growth this year is projected at 8 percent.

"If there is something interesting and it looks attractive to us, we will take an interest," David Eldon, chair of Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank, told reporters. HSBC wants more partners among smaller Chinese banks, though he acknowledged that they "do have some difficulties to deal with," he said.

HSBC wouldn't comment on reports of its interest in Guangzhou Commercial Bank, though the Chinese bank said talks on a deal wouldn't be affected by its financial problems.

China has promised as part of its new membership in the World Trade Organization to give foreign institutions the same treatment as Chinese banks by 2007.

To avoid the expense of setting up networks of thousands of branches, foreign financial firms are instead buying into smaller Chinese banks and brokerages.

That would give them access to China's 8.6-trillion-yuan ($1-trillion) pool of savings and markets for such things as credit cards and consumer loans.

"If they can't enter a market on their own, they can parlay the cooperative relationship with a local institution into a new business," said Nick Lardy, an expert on China's economy at the Brookings Institution. *AP*

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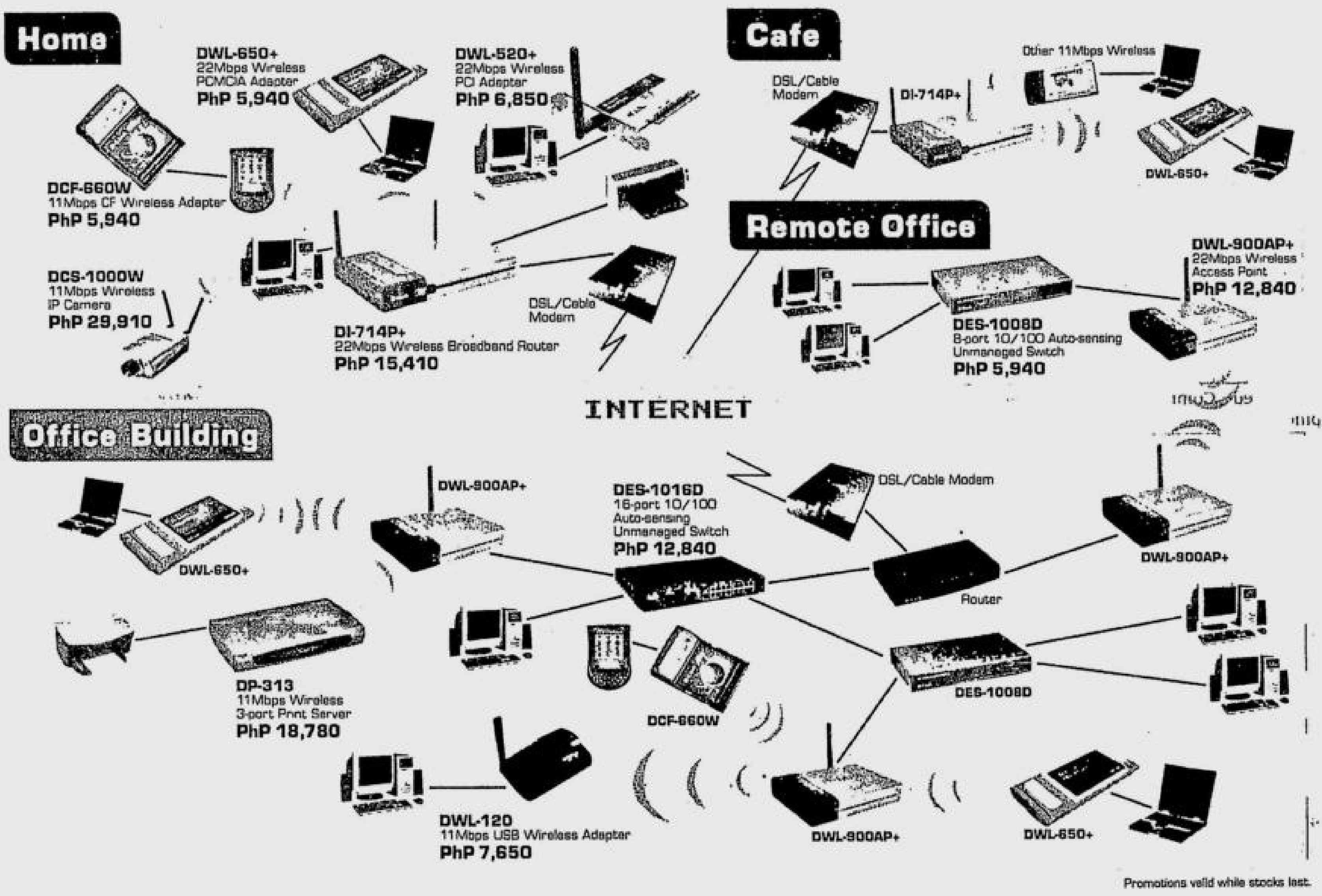

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Notice is given that the estate of the late DANTE STA. ANA w/ waiver of rights was extrajudicially settled by his heirs as per Doc#63 Page#13 Bk#XXXVII series of 2003 before notary public Atty. El Cid C Fajardo Pasig City PDI 1/15,22,29,2003

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late BASILIO CABRERA has been settled by his heirs per Doc. No. 300; Page No. 40; Book No. XXVII; Series of 2002 before Notary Public Atty. ANGEL R. GONZALES PTR No. 9968971 Pasay City
(PDI- January 15, 22 & 29 2003)

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late AMANDO T. BERNARDO with waiver of rights has been extrajudicially settled among his heirs as per Doc. No. 422; Page No. 86; Book No. III; Series of 2003 before Notary Public Atty. Rommel L. Yap of Pasig City
(PDI-Jan.22,29&Feb.5, 2003)

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late IRENEO V. GUERRERO, who died on January 9, 2001, the object of settlement is executed by his heirs before Notary Public Expedito Mapa of Naga City as per Doc.#570, Page#57, Book#19, Series of 2002 (PDI-Jan. 8,15 & 22, 2002)

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Died in Tamag, Vigan, Ilocos Sur at the age of 78.

His wife **Consuelo C. Pasion**; children **Virgilio** and **France**, **Ruben & Naia**, **Mildred** and **Jesse P. Reyes**, **Catalino Jr.** and **Ludy**, **Jaime & Ellen**, **Dennis** and **Kelly**; grandchildren **Angel**, **Victor**, **Rebecca**, **Ruben Jr.** (†), **Jimuelle**, **Jileny**, **Claribell** and **Clarissa**, request for your prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

He lies in state at Fr. G. Willmann, S. J. Suite, Holy Trinity Memorial Chapels, Sucat, Parañaque City.

Interment will be at the Loyola Memorial Park on Saturday, 25 January 2003 after the 2:00 p.m. Mass at Holy Trinity Memorial Chapels.

God saw you getting tired when a cure was not to be, so He wrapped His arms around you, and whispered, "Come to Me." You didn't deserved what you went through, so He gave you rest.

Ester Saulog Herrera

of Imus and Indang, Cavite

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord on January 14, 2003 at the age of 61.

Her loving husband **Dr. Rafael R. Herrera**, Ex-Mayor of Indang; children **Malu & Rommel Remulla, Greg & Joy, Lorna, Rafael Jr.,** and **Lira**; grandchildren **Gizelle & Iana Remulla, CJ** & **Gio** and **Ado**; brothers and sisters, in-laws, nephews, nieces, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the family residence, 276 Balagtas St., Indang, Cavite.

Interment will be on Saturday, January 25, 2003 at Indang Catholic Cemetery after the 3:00 p.m. Mass at the St. Gregory Parish Church, Indang, Cavite.

JULIO MAYOR NERECINA, JR.

November 12, 1939 - January 18, 2003

He is survived by his wife **SHIRLEY BERNALES**; children **HOPE** (†), **CHARITY MAE & MENDY, FAITH LOVELY & QUEENIE SHIRLEY II.**

His remains lie in state at the Cosmopolitan Church, 1368 Taft Ave., cor. Apacible St., Manila.

Interment will be on Thursday, January 23, 2003 at the Manila Memorial Park Crematory at 11:00 a.m. after the 8:30 a.m. service at Cosmopolitan Church.

Jesus said: "I am the resurrection and life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies; and whoever believes in Me will never die."
John 11:25-26

CLEOFE CONSUNJI Vda. De HIZON

widow of Augusto P. Hizon

peacefully joined our Lord on January 20, 2003 at the age of 75.

Her bereaved family requests your prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Children	Grandchildren
Marita & Benjamin Dizon (†)	Marfee
Boy & Caring Garchitorena	Ella, Mitzi, Mia
Malou & John Sackett	Lee-Anne, Edward, Timothy
Dodo	Rocky, Sarina, Macky
Vinda & Manoling Yoingco	Ching, Sigrid
Robbie	
Fr. Arthur, SDB	
Mylah & Randy Libre	Miguel, Lorenzo
Marisa & Boyet del Rosario	Miki, Kimi, Ana
Pressy & John Kwok	Ramon, Aaron
Derick & Dalsa Montalban	

Her brothers & sisters: **Ester & Forting Aguas, Hernan (†) & Conching, Denta & Sito Cervero (†), Sis. Dorothy, OSB, Leoning & Annie, Tony & Zeny.**

Her remains lie in state at the Don Bosco Parish Church, San Lorenzo Village, Makati City. Her body will be transferred to the family residence at 76 Consunji St., San Fernando, Pampanga on Thursday, January 23, 2003 at 6:00 a.m.

Interment will be on Saturday, January 25, 2003 at Good Shepherd Memorial Park, Dolores, San Fernando, Pampanga after the 3:00 p.m. Mass at the San Fernando Metropolitan Cathedral.

Pls. omit flowers. Donations to her favorite charities will be appreciated.

TEODORA "DORIS" C. LEYCO

"Ate Doris For Others"

of Iba, Zambales

Peacefully passed away at the age of 68 on Sunday, January 19, 2003 at 1:15 p.m. after receiving the Sacraments.

Her bereaved husband **ATTY. MARIO O. LEYCO**; son **Nonoy** and wife **GLORIA**; daughter **CECILE**; grandchildren **FRANCIS, CATHERINE & PETER**; brother **ATO** (†) **CONTRERAS** & wife **CYD**; sister **LUZ C. FIRMALINO** & husband **ALDO**; brother **ATTY. DEO G. CONTRERAS, JR.** & wife **YOLY**; nephews, nieces, in-laws and relatives request the pious reader to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

She will lie in state at the family residence, Poblacion, Iba, Zambales on January 20-24. Requiem Mass will be held at 9 AM on January 24 at the St. Augustine Cathedral and afterwards on the same day her cremation will take place at La Funeraria Paz, Quezon City at 4 PM. In the evening a vigil will be held at the Chapel of Bangantalinga, Iba, Zambales where interment rites will be held on January 25 in the morning.

"Even when I walk through a dark valley, I feel no harm. For You are at my side, your rod and staff give me courage..."
Psalm 23:4

"In Christ all shall be made alive..." Corinthians 15:22

JUDGE TEODORO L. HERNANDO, SR.

Retired RTC Judge of Ilagan, Isabela and Tuguegarao City, Cagayan

Died peacefully in the infinite Grace and Goodness of the Lord on the 20th of January, 2003 at the age of 76.

His loving wife **Priscilla Layugan**; children **Maria Lourdes, Maria Imelda, Jose Mari** and **Nenette, Teodoro Ma. Jr., Ramon Paul** and **Ana Marie**; grandchildren **Hannah Francesca** and **Aaron James**; relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at La Funeraria Paz, G. Araneta Ave., Quezon City.

Interment will be announced later.

Message of Thanks

We, the family of the late

JEROME DAVID SANTOS, M.D.

who passed away in the Grace of our Lord on January 7, 2003

wish to thank all those who visited, offered Masses and prayers, sent flowers, donations, messages of sympathy, attended funeral services and/or condoled with and comforted us during the hour of our bereavement.

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An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one. *Always caring...* INQUIRER OBITUARIES

> *"I am the resurrection and life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies; and whoever believes in Me will never die."*
> John 11:25-26

In Memory of our devoted and loving mother

MARIA BAUTISTA TAGAYUN

Peacefully left us in the loving embrace of the Lord on January 20, 2003 at the age of 89.

Her loving children **Myrna** and **Robert**, **Boy** (†), **Cris** and **Mhin**, **Mars** and **Emma**, **Chito**, **Bob** (†) and **Mely**, **Elizabeth** and **Russel**; grandchildren, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Magallanes Funeral Chapel, Magallanes Village, Makati City.

Interment will be on January 23, 2003 after the 2:00 p.m. Mass at Manila Memorial Park, Parañaque City.

> *" I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, will live, even though he dies; and whoever believes in Me will never die."*
> *John 11: 25-26*

In Loving Memories

LUCIA "Nanay Lucing" INTON Vda. De VIACRUSIS

December 13, 1924 - January 22, 1999
On her ***Fourth Death Anniversary***

Her husband **Alfredo Sr.** (†); children **Cesar** and **Belen**, **Ding** and **Miriam**, **Bot** and **Nessy**, **Beng** and **Nanding** (†), **Jess** and **Rosie**, **Chie** and **Tess**, **Boy** and **Erma**, **Viring** and **Ave**, **Bong** and **Lea**; grandchildren **Vic**, **Jun**, **Albert**, **Jean**, **Rachelle**, **Mydee**, **Paul**, **Randy**, **Eric**, **Hernan**, **Tek**, **Lorie**, **Jay R**, **Mutya**, **Anne**, **Leo**, **Francis**, **Andy**, **Beth**, **Lucia Rin**, **Christian**, **Matty**, **AJ**, **Janet** and **Andrea Beatrice**; and great grandchildren request other relatives and friends to remember her in their prayers.

The Holy Mass will be offered at the following churches on January 22, 2003:

Dolores Church, San Fernando, Pampanga	7:30 AM
St. Anthony Church, Mataing, Subic, Zambales	7:30 AM
Carmelite Monastery, Subic, Zambales	7:30 AM
St. Joseph Parish Church, Olongapo City	6:00 AM & 5:00 P.M.
Columban Church, Olongapo City	7:30 AM

(Mass to be held at Filmixco Compound, Sindalan, San Fernando, Pampanga at 8:00 AM)

"Let the words of my mouth meet your Favor, keep the thoughts of my heart before you, Lord, my rock, my redeemer..."
Psalm 21:15

CARMELITA BAGUISI VDA. DE DUMLAO

of Nueva Vizcaya and Sydney, Australia
Dec. 17, 1916 - Jan. 11, 2003

Her loving children **Edna** and **Stephen**, **Albemar** and **Racel**, **Alicia**, **Dennis** and **Jin**; grandchildren **Philipp**, **Michael**, **Dianne**, **Mitchell**, **Donna**, **James**, **Zacharry** and **Natasha**; brothers, sisters and other relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at the NVGCHS Gymnasium, Nueva Vizcaya. Interment is on January 25, 2003 at Bayombong private cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations to the Bayombong United Methodist Church will be highly appreciated.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

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MANILA INTERNATIONAL CONTAINER PORT
January 21, 2003

NOTICE OF SALE

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 2601 to 2610 of the Tariff and Customs Code of the Philippines, as amended, in relation to CMO 36-2001, there will be a **PUBLIC AUCTION SALE** to be conducted at the Manila International Container Port on **February 7, 2003** of the hereunder articles in lots. Said goods shall be available for public viewing on **February 6, 2003.**

In the event of a failed bidding, for want of bidders or lack of an acceptable bid, the unsold lots shall be re-auctioned the next succeeding business day at the floor price reduced by 20%.

Lot No. 119-02 CONCORD INT'L TEXTILE CORP. 1st Advertisement 'As Is Where Is'	One (1) set MAN B&W Holby diesel engine, type 12V28/32H MCR w/complete alternator and switchboard. Output 2419 KW, 3024KVA, COS PHI 9.9.3, 11KV, 60 HZ, 720 RPM and external auxiliaries. Remarks: Shipment arrived on July 7, 1994.
Floor Price: Php23,602,300.00	Location: Marzan CY CFS

Registration Fee : Php2,000.00
Cash Bond : Php 20,000.00
Payment : 50% downpayment and the remaining balance payable within forty-eight (48) hours for the winning bidder.

For further inquiry, please contact MR. ISIDRO A. PRE, Chief, ACDD, Telephone Numbers 247-09-77 and 245-41-01 local 2283.

(Sgd.) **ATTY. FELIPE A. BARTOLOME**
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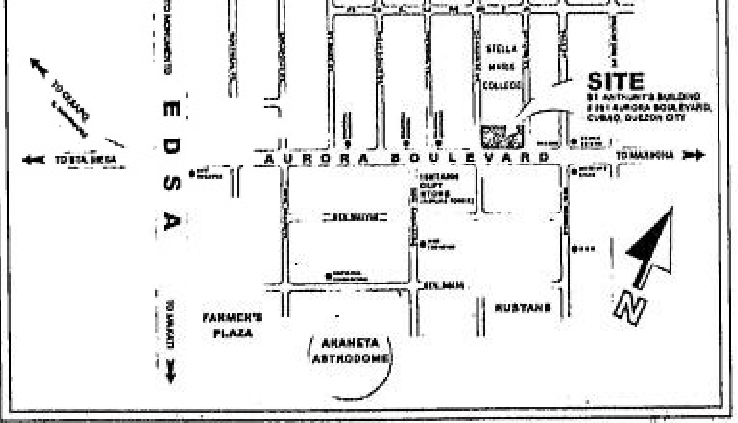

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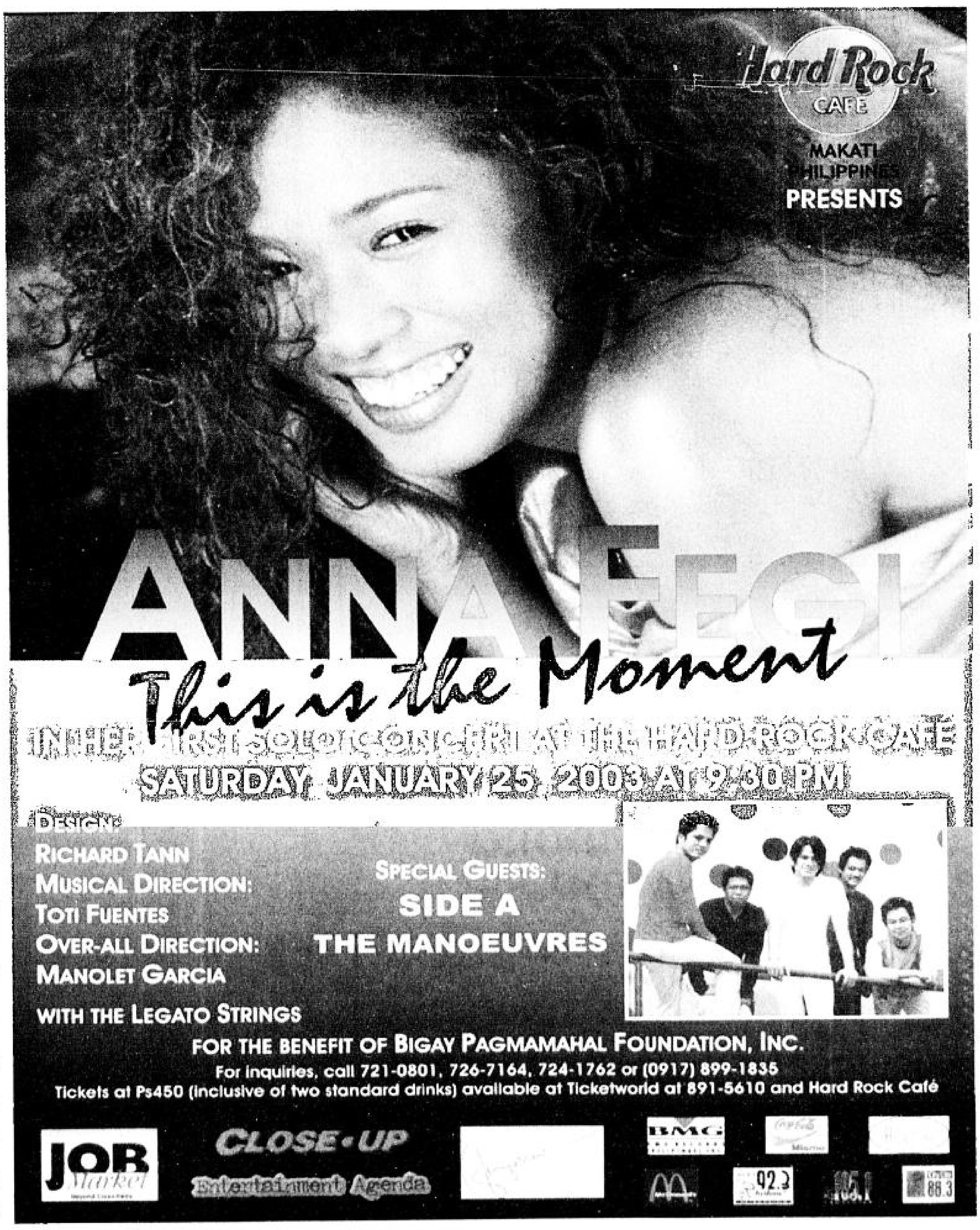

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Can your boss read your e-mail?

DEAR WW: I know this will sound paranoid, but last week my boss said something to me that he could only have known if he had been reading my email. Isn't the privacy of my email at work protected just like my phone calls are?

Bugged

WORKING WOUNDED

Bob Rosner

There is an old rule of journalism that Working Wounded always follows: when paraphrasing someone famous, make sure the person is dead. Better yet: make sure their lawyers are dead, too. So, with apologies to Shakespeare (who has been dead for several centuries-which still isn't enough for the average high school student), I offer you this ditty:

Friends, Romans, coworkers, lend me your ears.

I come to bury privacy, not to praise it.

The email that workers do lives after them;

It is not protected like their phones.

The truth about e-mail privacy is that there isn't any. Big Brother is here--in the form of your employer--and he is legally permitted complete access to your email. The courts so far have ruled that since the corporation owns the equipment over which the email is sent, they also own the content.

According to the New York Times, the Society for Human Resource Management (an HR trade organization) suggests companies ask employees to sign a form which says, "I am aware that the company reserves, and will exercise, the right to review, audit, intercept, access and disclose all matters on the company's e-mail system at any time, with or without employee notice, and that such access may occur during or after working hours."

So unless you want your email messages strung up around the office like so much dirty laundry, ask yourself the following questions before you hit send.

Does my company have an email policy? Policies, when they exist, vary widely. Intel's policy permits routine email monitoring; Apple's policy places employee email off limits. Grab your dusty old personnel manual and see if your company has a policy. If there's nothing on e-mail, play it safe and assume that your company's philosophy is closer to Intel's than Apple's.

Do non-employees have access to your company's e-mail? According to Judd Lees, an attorney with Williams, Kastner & Gibbs (Bellevue, Washington), employers may be prohibited from reviewing employees' e-mail without the employees' consent if the system is also accessed by non-employees (he bases his interpretation on the Electronic Communications Privacy Act of 1986).

Would you be comfortable having your email appear in the company newsletter? There's probably only one thing in life that's immortal--a dumb missive you wrote to a coworker in a fit of anger. So unless you want that puppy nipping at your heels for the rest of your career, don't send it via e-mail.

Who knows? Maybe the policies will change. Employee phone privacy is protected; perhaps in the future we'll get the same protection for our written words. But for the moment, I again refer you to the Bard who (with no paraphrasical help from me) called the tune 300 years ago: "The better part of valor is discretion..."

(Mr. Rosner is the author of "The Boss's Survival Guide," McGraw Hill 2001, and "Working Wounded," Warner 2000, a speaker and founder of the award-winning Working Wounded.com & RetentionEvangelist.com. He is based in Seattle, Washington, USA. E-mail him at bob@workingwounded.com.*)*

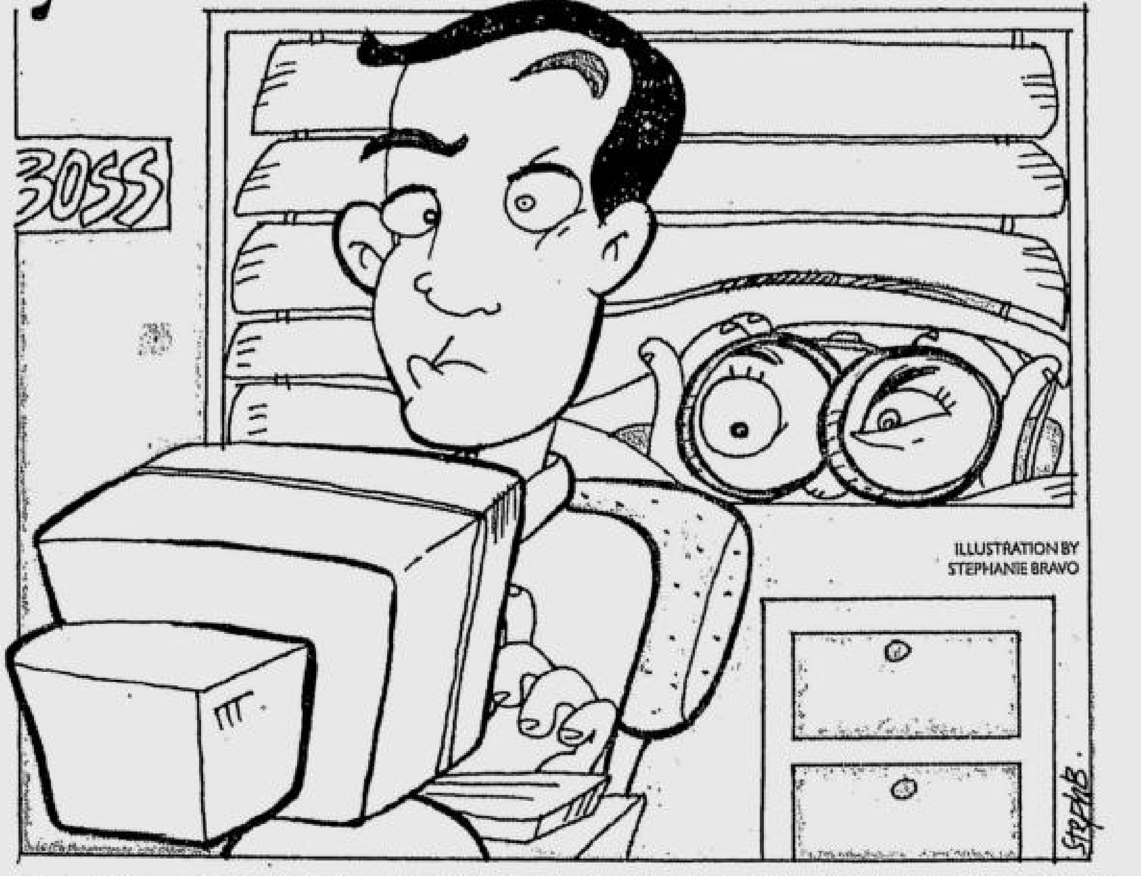


ILLUSTRATION BY STEPHANIE BRAVO

How to deal with working mom's guilt

GUILT picks up where our maternal instincts drop off. Like an invisible umbilical cord, it keeps us linked to our baby no matter where we are. Like a compass, it tells us when we've strayed too far. Like an alarm, it relentlessly blares warnings at us. And like an old song, it comes back again and again.

Guilt is the shadow of maternal love. As painful as it feels, it reminds us of our emotional connection to our child. We want to be with him, we want to be part of his life-and in our struggle to understand our guilt, we should also embrace it as one of the most powerful affirmations of our bond.

Office blues

But while guilt affirms our connection to our child, it also makes us question it. We spend an average of ten hours in the office-ten hours when others assume the tasks that we feel should be ours: feeding him, playing with him, holding him. Pretty soon, we start questioning whether or not he prefers those people over us. "Why does he smile more at his yaya than at me? Why didn't he stop crying when I picked him up, but then immediately settled down when he was with his dad?"

When guilt hits you at the office, keep this thought in mind: the only way to deal with it is to cut it down to size: understand what's causing it, then find out what we can do and how to compensate for what we can't. When we feel guilty, we're afraid that our actions (i.e., our time at the office) are endangering our connection with our child. But what exactly creates a healthy connection?

WORKING MOM

An Mercado Alcantara

Relationship pillars

The mother-child relationship is supported by three pillars: trust, attachment, and a sense of belonging. Trust is established through the trust cycle, which involves repeatedly meeting your child's needs. He is hungry, you give him milk. He is tired, you help him settle down for a nap. He is bored, you play with him. Every act teaches the child that he is in a safe, loving environment-and that you, his caregiver, create that environment.

When you're attacked by guilt, simply return to this cycle of trust. Be there at least once today for a feeding or to put him to sleep. When you take your baby's anxiety away, you return to the trust cycle.

Attachment, the second pillar, is built through mutually positive interactions. You smile, play and praise the child who, in turn, rewards you with a giggle or a hug. Soon he learns to initiate these interactions, like inviting you to play by reaching for your hand. Each of these events develops your child's sense of self-esteem, and elevates your relationship from the provision of basic needs to a sense of enjoyment of each other's company. Your baby singles you out from others "I like her, I feel good when I'm with her" even when he is not hungry, sleepy, or bored. Attachment can only begin to develop after trust has been firmly established (for the simple reason that you can't enjoy being with someone who consistently ignores your needs). Again, if guilt attacks you, come home with play in mind. Spend time simply enjoying each other¹s company.

Sense of family

Belonging, the third pillar, is an offshoot of trust and attachment. When you and your child learn to turn to each other, not just for basic needs, but also out of pure joy in each other's company, the sense of a family is elevated from the physical to the emotional sense. "I am safe here, I am happy here, this is where I should be." This sense of truly being part of each other, no one and no amount of guilt can ever take away from you.

Cherish is and hold it up as a shield against your own anxiety. He is your baby and you are his mom-no one can change that.

(An Mercado Alcantara is editor-in-chief of Metro Working Mom published by ABS-CBN Publishing. For more tips, get a copy of this months issue with Vilma Santos on the cover. You may reach her at rmwm_abscbn@skyinet.net*)*

Charisma is the stuff leaders are made of

By Dr. Tony Alessandra

YOU'RE squirming in your seat, wondering if the next speaker can possibly be less inspiring than the preceding one, when, suddenly, the room falls silent. Looking poised and confident, the next presenter smiles, then begins.

Instantly, it's clear that he's good.

His strong, measured voice, his relaxed tone, his precisely articulated and well-chosen words, even his classy but understated appearance seem to fixate the crowd.

You think, "Wow! Who is this guy?" And then you realize it's just not what he is saying, or how he looks. It's his whole being.

As his voice and gestures signal that he's nearing the high point of his remarks, you feel yourself soaring along with the ideas he presents so passionately. This guy has it!

Appeal

But what does he have? What do real leaders have that can inspire you and draw you to them, that can cause you perform beyond expectations to accomplish their goals? Is it speaking well or projecting an attractive, exciting image? Actually, it's all that--and more.

For lack of a better term, we often group such qualities under the term charisma. I've been studying, teaching and writing about human behavior for more than 20 years now. As a result, I know charisma when I see it, even if it's sometimes hard to pinpoint. Charisma is the ability to positively influence others by connecting with them physically, emotionally and intellectually.

It's what makes people like you and enjoy being around you, even when they don't know much about you. This personal magnetism can exist at the level of mass movements--such as politicians and evangelists--or in the small-scale encounters of everyday life, such as the shop owner who makes you feel so comfortable that you cheerfully drive a few extra miles to her store.

Glasses

Contrary to popular wisdom, charisma is not something you're born with. Our personalities consist, let's say, of a series of containers, like cups or glasses. Some are nearly empty, some brimming, yet others are partially filled to varying degrees. Together, they constitute our potential charisma.

If all the glasses were filled to the top, you'd be so charismatic people would think you were a god. But nobody has a complete set of totally full glasses, although some really gifted people may have come close to this ideal.

But, for most of us, the glasses are filled a bit erratically, though we can add to them.

Components

Here, as I see them, are the seven main components of charisma--or, the "glasses:"

1. Your silent message

You unconsciously send out signals to others. Maybe you look them right in the eye, or maybe you stare at your shoes when you talk. Perhaps you slump your shoulders, or maybe you square them confidently. All these shape your image and affect the people you want to lead.

2. Your persuasive talent

No idea, however great, ever gets anywhere until it's adopted. Charismatic executives can distill complex ideas into simple messages so that even the guy who sweeps the floor understands what the company stands for and why that's important.

3. Your ability to speak well

You may have a zillion terrific ideas, but who will know if you can't articulate them?

4. Your listening skill

Rarely taught and infrequently practiced, listening is nonetheless a key to communicating and making others feel special in your presence.

5. Your use of space and time

Again, though it's often overlooked, use of spatial and temporal territories can make or break relationships.

6. Your ability to adapt to others

Building rapport means understanding other people's personalities, then adapting your own behavior to increase compatibility.

7. Your vision, your ideas

Regardless of how strong and persuasive a speaker you are, how adept you are at connecting with others, how well you listen, use your space or time, or send out silent signals, you've still got to have something to say...or you'll just be an empty suit.

So, it's not a single ingredient that makes a person charismatic, and, more important, charisma isn't based on I.Q., genetics, social position, wealth, or luck. Instead, it can be learned.

Charisma's importance

Learning to improve your charisma is more important than ever. Why? Change calls for strong, mesmerizing leaders. In our age of start-ups, acquisitions and turnarounds, that's truer than ever.

Television and our general emphasis on the visual make charismatic people more effective.

Our expectations have risen. We've come to demand more from people than mere competence.

The old-fashioned kind of hierarchy, the command-and-control environment, is passé. Even the highest-ranking officials need more than their title to get people to accept their ideas. In this era of "empowerment," when empathy and support are revered, charismatic people stand out because they're communicators who are able to see things from another's perspective and continually seek to find the common ground.

Those with charisma, are usually self-confident optimists. Viewing almost all problems as solvable, focusing on desired results rather than possible failures helps encourage people to step forward.

ILLUSTRATION BY ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

Ways to improve

All these are reasons for you to try to greatly improve your charisma. Remember that even if you never get a chance to head a corporation or even hold office in the local PTA, you can use your charisma to do good for yourself and others.

A person who develops his or her charisma is likely to do well in all aspects of life. That's because, on several different levels, they better connect with people. By definition, the charismatic person is more other-directed, more empathic. That gives them more personal power--and that's a big plus for anybody.

Take basketball star Michael Jordan. Despite being the most-heralded professional player of his era, he quit the hardwoods to play minor-league baseball for a time. He didn't make it to the big leagues, but he didn't strike out with his millions of fans.

As you seek to improve you charisma and personal power, remember that when people feel someone is making them do something, they're often frustrated and resentful. As a result, they dig in their heels. The truly charismatic person strives to create feelings of collaboration and equality. They approach others interactively and try to give them a choice.

Communicating charisma

Testing this doesn't require a big, important issue. Everyday tasks will suffice. For example, saying "Copy this report" is a mild form of coercion from a position of power. But asking "Would you mind copying this report?" or "Do you have time to copy this report right now?" is more interactive.

Similarly, you can't successfully order employees to "Be more productive!" or "Improve your efficiency!" But you can organize them into teams or create suggestion systems that really work.

Also, recognize another person's achievements, contributions and particular skills. Catch someone doing something right! And celebrate those successes. Everyone wants to feel that they're on a winning team.

Challenges

Be aggressively optimistic and willing to be the first to do something and to take the heat if it doesn't work out. Charismatic people have heard all the bromides about why you can't rock the corporate boat but they just pay less attention to them.

Instead, they relish a challenge, not just for themselves but for their followers, too. So if you give your people some control over resources and influence over how to do a task, you'll help them build self-confidence.

In fact, the charismatic person often good-naturedly challenges, prods and pokes as he or she encourages others to stretch themselves.

Again, take Michael Jordan. He's said to, even in practice, be the loudest, most demanding player on the court, goading the other Bulls to give their all. It's his way of being inspirational; he never stops competing, even when no one is keeping score.

The potential to be charismatic leader is within you, too. And the payoff for doing so has never been higher.

(Copyright C 2003 by Dr. Tony Alessandra, used with permission. For feedback or information regarding Dr. Allessandra's products or services, please contact info@alessandra.com, www.alessandra.com (760) 603-8110 or FAX (760) 603-8010.)

email: peopleatwork@inquirer.com.ph

PEOPLE at WORK

Editor Raul O. Marcelo ◎ Subsection Editor Regina Galang Reyes

Discriminatory practices hinder hiring of good talent

By Tita Datu Puangco

ILLUSTRATION BY ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

I APPRECIATE very much your column in the Inquirer. I am presently a loans officer in a bank that chooses and promotes its employees based on job performance, intelligence and passing marks in the bank's oral and written exams. However, even with a good job, I am open to the possibilities of getting a better job.

But when I started applying with other companies, I observed that other companies are concerned with physical attributes. My present company does not discriminate based on a person's physical attributes. I am presentable and pleasant looking but my concern is my 5'2" height. In the last good job that I applied, I was among the top three candidates for consideration by the vice president. But I was not chosen because of my height. This has been bothering me lately. I am intelligent as my grades and records will show. What is your view in this situation?

Vertically Challenged

Thank you for your interesting letter. My answer is not to worry about your height. A company that bases its hiring decision based simply on height is not worth joining, especially if it is a bank or a financial institution. It would be a different matter if the core business of the company is in areas where height is required, like that of a modeling agency or a basketball team.

Advice

FOR THE
ANXIOUS PERSON
AT WORK

Filipino size

For a Filipino, your height is average, although there may be many younger, taller Filipinos today. I remember in the seventies, I got a scholarship to study in the United States. I noticed many tall people but also people of my height. In the department stores, I had to buy my shoes from the children's section. At first, I felt somewhat shy and less assertive, because of my height. But another Asian classmate who was tall told me that tall people have problems too. I realized that instead of being conscious of my height, I should instead focus on what I can do something about. When it comes to schoolwork and academics, the playing field is equal. So doing my best, I discovered one can gain respect and stature before peers with brain power rather than height.

But it is a sad fact that in our country, because of the limited job market, some companies engage in discriminatory practices. If we look at some job announcements, they discriminate on age, sex or sometimes religion. These practices would be taboo in more developed countries. I remember a human resource practitioner who resigned from her job because she could no longer endure the discriminatory practices of her employer. She was asked to hire a *"bodegero"* or a warehouseman. Around 20 men applied and the employer asked her to choose persons who are good-looking and *"maamo ang mukha."* She had to line them up and scrutinize their physical assets. She was so embarrassed when one of the men asked, "Are you hiring a warehouseman or for an actor?"

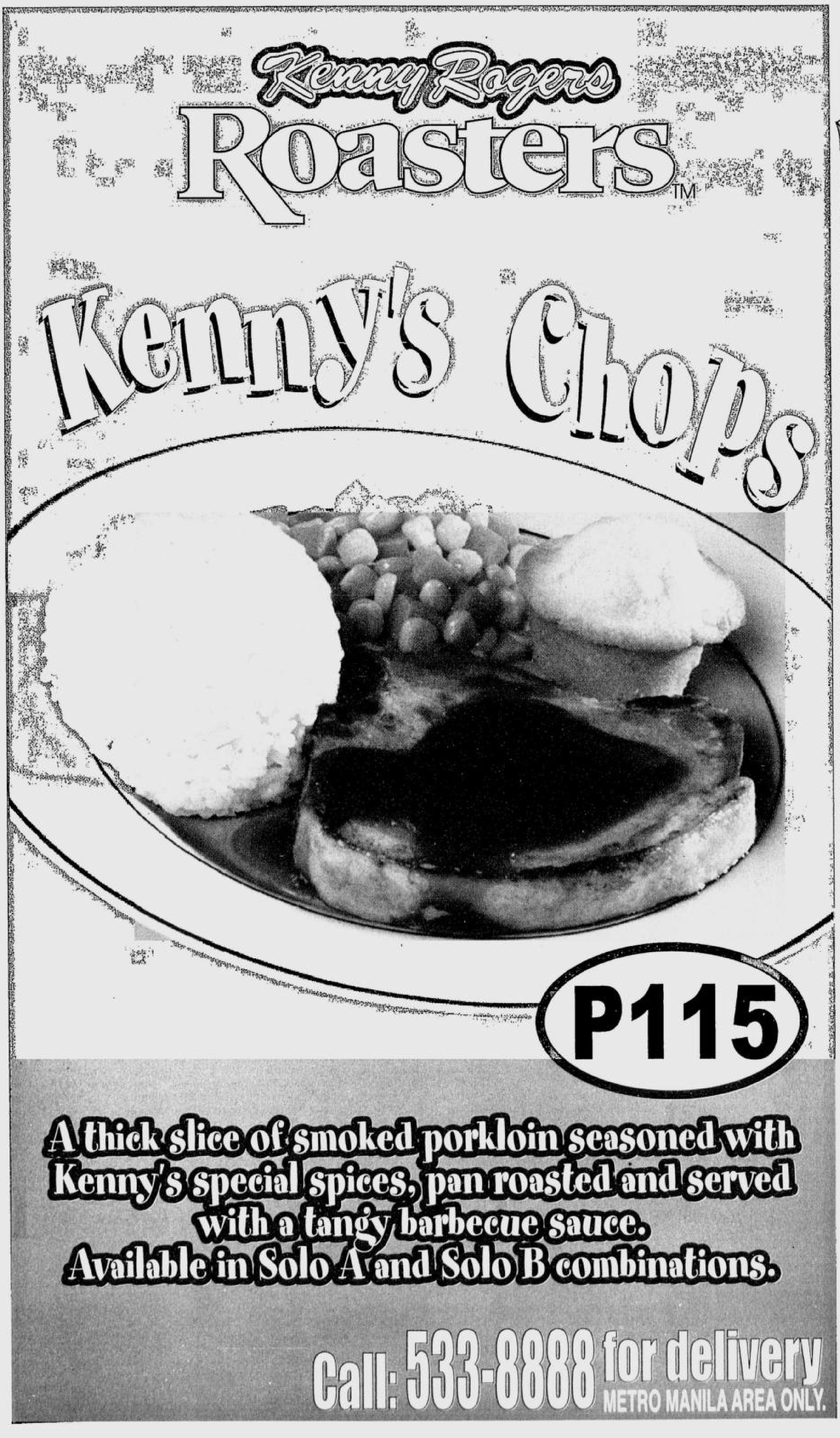
Human dignity

I am also appalled at the way our society treats smaller than average people in slapstick comedies or in entertainment. As a Christian, I believe that every person is a child of God, made in His image and likeness. No one has the right to mistreat or make a laughing stock of other people. We have to esteem and respect the dignity of the human person, whether tall or small, whether rich or poor, whether beautiful or ugly. More than outer appearances, it is the soul and the heart of the person that matters.

A final word on this issue-height is not something that is within your area of control or influence. It is at most an area of concern. It is best to leverage your strengths rather than focus on your shortcomings. I hope you find the job and the company that has the same respectful climate as your present company.

If you wish to learn how to build unity in the family and with different cultures, races and people, attend the FamilyFest 2003 sponsored by the New Families of the Focolare Movement on Jan. 26 to be held at the Ultra from 3 to 6 p.m. The event is in connection with the 4th World Meeting of Families.

(Ms Puangco is CEO and president of Ancilla Enterprise Development Consulting. Send comments, feedback or requests for advice through e-mail to ancilla-edc@ pacific.net.ph *or fax to 892-2902.)*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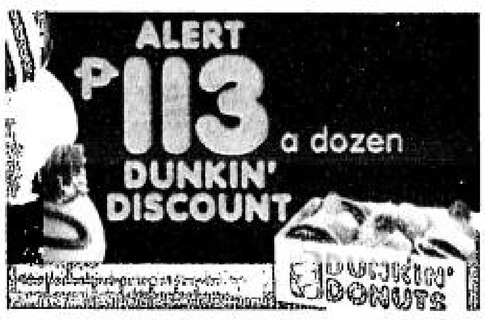
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LIFESTYLE

Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso ■ *Chief of Correspondents* Pam Pastor

FANATIC

HERE'S your guide to stalking the people you idolize—a list of fans dos and don'ts, tips for getting autographs and horror stories of people who went from fanatic to obsessive. While you're at it, enjoy our interviews with Duncan Sheik and Boyz II Men. Join the 2bU! promo to win tickets to the latter's Valentine concert.
All this because everyone is a fan, even your favorite celebrity.

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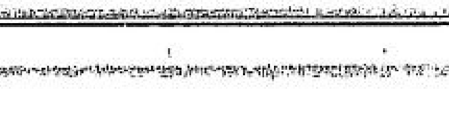

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Tips for fanatics

By Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent

IN THE NAME of "fanhood," people go to amazingly great lengths and do all sorts of things, especially crazy and dangerous ones.

A lot of fans tend to go overboard out of desperation, detachment and lack of self-control. They can be leeches and even sadists sometimes.

So, here are some tips for uncontrollable fans who easily go bonkers. This is to remind them that at the end of the day, it's all about respect—for one's idol, for fellow fans, for non-fans and for one's self.

Don't...

...pretend you know everything about your personal god, and even if you do, don't announce it to everyone around, especially to him. An I-know-more claim may cause rude remarks. Telling your idol that you know all his body measurements is pretty eye-popping that he'll think of you as some freak.

...pick a fight (or partake in one) with the fans of your idol's rivals. Even if it's a universal truth that your idol is much better and more talented than his *kasabayans*, just keep it to yourself.

If you are a huge fan of Angelika dela Cruz and you have all the RDL skin-care products to prove it, don't stoop, cause a commotion and taint the name of your idol by playing a pingpong match of "My idol is waaaay better than your idol!" with Jolina's loyal minions.

...be a shadow. Don't pester your idol and make him lose his respect for you by following him north, east, south, west. Don't follow him to the CR, to his car, to the motel, to his house.

...be a stalker. Don't take the front seats of all his concerts, bar tours, mall shows and TV guestings and invite yourself to his family reunion. Don't sneak into his house and steal his underwear or collect hair samples.

...use your idol for personal gain. Making him the source of your strength is forgivable, but using him as a stepping stone to your dreams of becoming the next bold starlet is baaaad. Remember that the title user is yuck-inducing and that the loser who never runs out of claims-to-fame is pathetic.

...spend all your money just to prove you are a huge fan. If you are the type who eats Value Savers, Busog Tipid or Budget Meals every single day, I suggest you put an end to your Jude Law VHS, VCD, DVD and LD collections.

If you claim to be the Sex Bomb Dancers' greatest fan, you don't have to watch their gig at SM Cebu just because it's part of their mall tour. There are definitely other ways to prove you are the bomb. The question is, why do you want to prove it anyway?

Do...

...have your own personality. No matter how remarkable or inspiring your idol is, strive to be your own person and not just a copycat. Emulate your idol's best traits. Know when to stop copying his hairstyles and fashion statements. Being a clone is boring and emerging as second best isn't any good. Why be second-best Mike Luis when you can be the best *you*?

...have a life apart from that of a fan's. Don't waste your life by choosing to head the Universal Sweet fans' club (Las Piñas chapter) instead of pursuing your goals of becoming the first-ever out gay lawyer in the Philippines. You can always make the choice of being a fan of someone for life, just make sure you have a life. A real one.

...try to be the best that you can be and have fans yourself. I'm not talking about an ego trip. Just maximize your potentials, go for your goals and have a blast doing it. Being a fan is nice, but I believe a lot will agree when I say that having your own fans is nicer.

E-mail the author at katotino@yahoo.com

The talented Mr. Sheik

By Maui V. Reyes
2bU! Correspondent

DUNCAN Sheik

"THAT'S a pretty interesting question," Duncan Sheik says when asked just how much of the songs on his latest album, "Daylight," are 100 percent him. "If you listen to the record, it's from one perspective, but it's all totally me, and it springs from different kinds of experiences."

Experience is certainly something this musician doesn't lack. Since bursting into the scene in 1996 with the hit single "Barely Breathing", Duncan Sheik has dabbled in everything, from producing albums to composing for theater.

Many of his songs have landed spots in movie soundtracks as well—"In the Absence of the Sun", a cut from his self-titled debut, made its way into the sound track of "The Saint," and in 1998, girls swooned over the painful "Wishful Thinking" from the movie "Great Expectations."

It seemed fame and recognition was already in the stars for the South Carolina native (who was born in Montclair, New Jersey). As a child, he dreamed of recording his first album. "I used to played air guitar, yeah," he laughs. "But I also actually played the guitar. It was a life dream of mine, to be able to make music."

While composing his own tunes, he'd turn to the music of Simple Minds, Depeche Mode, and '70s pop. "Art-pop stuff... basically, music that aspires to have a certain depth," he says.

But it was in college where Duncan really flexed those guitar muscles of his. He played guitar for a band called Liz and Lisa, which featured two female vocalists—Liz Mitchell and Lisa Loeb. Don't think he got to share the spotlight with either of them. He was, and still is, painfully shy. "I was terrified of singing in public," he shares. "I mean, I had a lot of fun playing for them, I was in that band for about a year."

At 19 years old, Duncan decided it was time to pursue the career he wanted. But first, he had to overcome his jittery nerves and face the crowd. Being a Buddhist, he credits chanting as a way to relax and gain self-confidence.

He then made a demo which he shopped around the industry. Atlantic picked it up, and in 1996, his self-titled debut hit the stores, earning four stars from Rolling Stone Magazine.

Heavy breathing

Was the success of his first album everything he expected it to be?

"It was substantial but not huge. I mean, life didn't change very much," he says. That is, if your life doesn't include a Grammy nomination, and numerous gold records and awards here and there.

"The album didn't make me a household name, and I don't get mobbed," he points out. "And what really matters to me is that someone likes the record, and someone appreciates what I do, and I'm happy with that. Because oh boy, I do not want to get mobbed!"

One person who didn't pass up the chance to work with Mr. Sheik was Steven Sater, a New York playwright who asked Duncan to come up with the music for some songs he wrote. The result was the album "Phantom Moon," which got mixed reviews.

Duncan was not fazed.

"I was in France and we made a pop record, and I mean, people wouldn't care if it was Justin or Eminem or someone else. I made the music for the song, and I just want to move people. If it doesn't work, then it doesn't work."

What does work is his third and most recent album, "Daylight." "Most of the songs on it have themes of illusions, fantasies and delusions," he laughs. "It's interesting to see how people interpret it into their own lives."

Made up of 11 tracks written by Duncan, the album was produced by Pat Leonard and not Rupert Hines, who worked on his first two albums.

The change in producers has helped Duncan come up with a more honest album, one that pushes himself to the limits. The exertion must have paid off, since the single, "On a High," has helped the album shoot up the US HOT AC and Modern Adult charts.

"[Leonard] has composed most of Madonna's hit songs, and is an incredibly diverse musician," Sheik says. "He brought an enormous number of things to the table, and he's more critical that Rupert, who was very easy-going, which is great. But I think the strict approach is more effective. It was a great learning experience."

Duncan's not one to turn down a chance to share what he has learned—or just to work with others. Together with Lisa Loeb, he traveled to Cuba for the Musical Bridges Foundation-sponsored cultural exchange mission in 1999. Last May, he hopped on to Albania, smack in the middle of the Kosovo crisis, to play for the War Child organization.

Both were eye-openers for the musician, having seen for himself the different conflicts between cultures.

"It was a very humbling experience," he recalls. "I realized all these enormous difficulties people deal with, and how much stronger they are than we. I mean, like in Cuba, there is a whole population of people who are growing up with ridiculous political persecution."

On a roll

While Duncan would rather write songs, he's not one to turn down an opportunity to work with other songwriters and composers.

After working with Steven Sater, Duncan found himself composing music for New York plays. He has composed music for the New York Shakespeare Festival's presentation of "Twelfth Night" in Central Park.

"It wasn't really something that I wanted to do," Duncan says. "But I wanted to try it out, and Shakespeare in the Park was so much fun, so it worked out."

He is working with Sater again on an "anti-musical" adaptation of the 19th-century play, "Spring Awakening."

Quite a feat for someone who claims that, although he loves to be entertained, he doesn't quite enjoy entertaining people.

"I meant that in today's world, entertainment is just like reality TV," he says. "It's like pro-wrestling, made up of stupid nonsense. The music business is all about choreography and big light shows with sexy outfits. I mean, I don't have a problem with watching that, but as a musician, I entertain with music, not dance."

He dances, though. "Just not in public," he laughs.

While most of today's music doesn't appeal to him ("There's a lot of new music now that's hugely successful but don't really move me, and I don't feel the need to comment on it, because really, I don't want to have anything to do with it"), he's quick to credit musicians like Coldplay and Beck for churning out stellar records. "I just tend to gravitate toward that kind of music," he says.

But he doesn't prop himself in the middle of just one genre. "I listen to a lot of Philip Glass, and then there's Brazilian music... a lot of late '60s, early '70s music, and of course, the Beatles and the Stones."

As much as Duncan loves making music for people, it's inevitable that there will be critics who won't appreciate his efforts. It is, after all, a shark-infested industry

He isn't at all concerned whether he has spent his "15 minutes of fame." "I don't really care, as long as there is an audience out there that enjoys my music," he says. "I just want to have a good time, and everything else is just meaningless and stupid."

And whenever anyone tries to put him down? "I just have to catch myself, and say, 'When anyone criticizes me, that's just ridiculous, because I've always done the best I can.'"

We couldn't agree more. His album is a great breather from the manufactured pop market, an escape from hard guitars and ear-pounding bass lines, replaced by smooth rhythms and lounge music.

As for his dancing?

"I told you I don't dance in public," he laughs. "Okay then, I'll probably dance for you guys when I go to the Philippines."

Duncan Sheik's album, "Daylight," under Warner Music Philippines, is available in record stores.

Finding the best strokes of foundation

Vanity Fare
Lora Gabol

AS with architectural design, the right foundation can make or break the final look of a made-up face. The best colors and application technique only come next to skill in creating a flawless canvas for makeup and, of course, the best products for the complexion involved. It is known among women, however, that finding the perfect foundation for their skin tone is like finding a soulmate.

I wouldn't give up too easily, though. Without a (or at least, an illusion of a) smooth, unblemished canvas, makeup just won't look right—and we wouldn't want that. I suggest setting aside a few minutes (or hours, if the need be!) of valuable shopping time in finding the best foundation. It is the one product that remains a constant in your routine long after smoky eyes and nude lips have gone, and probably the best makeup investment you'll ever make.

Right shade

Before I continue preaching about foundation dos and don'ts, allow me to be strict about a few things: Please acknowledge the skin color you were born with. Don't insist on using ivory when you're really tan. Also, stay away from products with pink tone. The built-in blush might look lovely in the bottle, but anything remotely resembling Caladryl shouldn't be anywhere near your face, believe me. Stick to yellow-toned foundations that suit Asian tones to a T.

Test foundation by swiping a little of the product on your jawline—and heading outdoors for a quick exposure to natural light. Beauty counter lighting can be misleading and can trick you into purchasing the wrong shade. If, under these meticulous circumstances, the product manages to "disappear" on your skin, congratulations! You are halfway done.

Right formulation

Is my face oilier than the Middle East? Do I have more dark spots than my dalmatian? Depending on your skin type and skin clarity, one of the many formulations of foundation is perfect for you.

Tinted moisturizer

Use it if: You have young, virtually blemish-free skin that needs to be evened out in some places. You can get away with only a tinted moisturizer if you don't have Mount Everest zits that need major concealing, and want a boost on the elusive "healthy glow" (back it up with some blush!)

Foundation how-to: Tinted moisturizers are more skin-care than makeup, really. Best for foundation neophytes, this product is almost goof-proof to apply. Just use an ample amount and slather it on as you would a regular moisturizer. Give skin a quick pick-me-up by massaging face with short, upward strokes while you're at it. Tip: If you tend to turn into an oil machine, dust your face with either loose or pressed powder before you head out.

Try: Laura Mercier Tinted Moisturizer, NARS Gel, Prescriptives Traceless, Nivea Tinted Moisturizer

Liquid foundation

Use it if: You're blessed with normal skin, have a couple of post-zit scars that are in the middle of their disappearing act, and want a sheer finish (read: No mask-like effect, please!).

Foundation how-to: This formulation leaves little room for beauty blunders—given that you have the right shade—because it blends right into skin. Put a dot of the product on your forehead, cheeks, and chin, and use clean fingers to blend into a seamless finish. Using a damp sponge may work, too, but the warmth of your fingers thins the product's consistency and blends the foundation like no other tool can. Tip: Spritz on distilled water before application, or mix foundation with a little moisturizer for more translucence. Again, set foundation with powder.

Try: L'Oreal AirWear Breathable Foundation, MAC Hyper Real Foundation, Clinique Gentle Light Makeup, Estee Lauder Equalizer

Cream foundation

Use it if: You have thirsty skin and a nasty cluster of blemishes from a breakout. Cream foundations are for those who really need the coverage, but have little time for mastering the mechanics of concealer.

Foundation how-to: A makeup artist/friend introduced a technique called stippling when using cream foundation. Using a sponge, pat on the product using short, repeated strokes until desired coverage is achieved. This works well for disguising dark spots and blemished areas. Lock foundation in with pressed powder applied with a fluffy brush—a better alternative to loose powder because particles are finer and have less tendencies to "chalk up" (cream foundation is already heavy to begin with).

Try: Bobbi Brown Cream Foundation, MAC Cream Foundation

Foundation compact

Use it if: You're greasier than a family-size pizza and need touch-ups throughout the day. Don't expect a luminous glow, though, as this usually leaves a matte finish.

Foundation how-to: Compacts are usually versatile because they can assume different consistencies and provide varied coverage depending on application. For good-skin days, use a wet sponge for lighter coverage and just tote around the compact for quick retouching when the need arises. Tip: Carry some oil-blotting paper with you as an alternative to wiping your face with powder every 15 minutes. Too much powder isn't good either!

Try: Maybelline Moisture White UV Powder, L'Oreal Translucide Compact, ZA Nwy York Wet/Dry Foundation

Stick foundation

Use it if: You're a fuss-free gal who doesn't need (or want) a lot of products to look polished. Stick foundations also double as concealer as they provide heavy coverage. Also best for oilier complexions and split-personality (read: combination) skin.

Foundation how-to: Apply only where it's needed, and please, go easy on it! Since this formulation goes on a little heavier than most, too much of it can leave you looking like you have a "mask" on. Swipe on under-eye circles and blemishes, and remember to blend well with clean fingers or a sponge! This product gives a powder finish, so you can leave that powder at home. Tip: Moisturize skin well to prevent creasing and boost the dewy factor.

Try: L'Oreal Quickstick, Laura Mercier Foundation Stick

L'Oreal, Maybelline, ZA New York, Nivea at PCX stores nationwide; Estee Lauder, Prescriptives, Bobbi Brown, Clinique at Rustan's; Laura Mercier, NARS at Essenses, Rustan's; MAC at Glorietta 4.

E-mail the author at pdi_vanityfare@hotmail.com

Author! Author!—via e-mail

By Pam Pastor

FIRST, a confession.

I wrote to a celebrity once—when I was in sixth grade. And although I know I might never live this down, okay, I will admit, it was a letter to Leonardo DiCaprio. Mind you, this was during the pre-"Titanic" era, back when he was still doing sitcom rounds and starring in okay-but-little-known movies. And the letter wasn't gushy or mushy. I certainly had no dreams of sweeping him off my feet with my slanted cursive. I just wanted to tell him that I thought he was cool.

Leonardo never wrote back. Soon, my interest in him dwindled. By the time every girl from 14 to 40 were swooning over him, fantasizing about making him the Jack to their Rose and murdering his name by calling him "Leonardo DiCarpio," I was long over him. My posters and pinups from Bop and Teen Beat had long been taken down and trashed, leaving nothing behind but annoying tape marks on my walls.

While my cousin Nona kept at it (I remember she received autographed photos of Joey Lawrence and some dude from "Baywatch"), it never occurred to me to write to another celebrity. Wasting my good stationery, writing with my best penmanship (which still isn't any good) and actually mailing the letter seemed like such a hassle, especially when I knew I would either be ignored or replied to by the celebrity's bored assistants.

It was easy for me to accept the digestible fact that celebrities would always be out of reach. I never turned out to be like a fifth-grade classmate who had deluded herself into believing that the guys of New Kids on the Block were calling her at home every night.

Not long after that, movie stars stopped being heroes for me. Authors became the big thing. And the advent of the e-mail and the Internet made it easier for me to reach them—or for them to reach me.

I know. I was just as surprised.

One day, I checked my e-mail and was bowled over to see British author Dougie Brimson's name in my inbox. He had stumbled upon my weblog and saw that I had bought his book "Billy's Log," which some people describe as the male version of "Bridget Jones' Diary." He mailed to ask me what I thought of the book. I told him that I found the miserable Billy quite endearing.

We continued to exchange mails, talking about his life, Manila and the perplexities of men, women and relationships.

Although the correspondence is not constant, I still get occasional mails from him and his website.

ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

Surprise

After reading and liking "The Man Who Ate the 747," the story of a man who validates world records for a living and who witnesses a man so in love with a woman that he proves it by eating a whole airplane, I visited the book's website and left a very short note. "I'm surprised movie producers haven't snatched it up yet."

A few days later, I was surprised to receive a reply from Ben Sherwood, the book's author. He e-mailed to thank and tell me that a movie company has bought the rights to the book, "with the promise of bright lights and big stars," but that nothing has come out of it yet. He was in the middle of writing his second book at that time.

Our next few e-mails discussed the book's characters, our mutual love for India and "The Book of Wonders," another Sherwood creation, which, according to the website, "will chronicle true stories about ordinary men and women doing the most extraordinary things—all the amazing feats that go unnoticed in this world."

He says he will keep me posted on the developments of the film version of "747," but there's no news yet.

Heartwarming

Jennifer Weiner's "Good In Bed" is the entertaining, witty and heartwarming story of Cannie, a plus-sized woman who plunges to depression when her loser of an ex-boyfriend writes a magazine article entitled "Loving a Larger Woman." But her misery soon gives way and becomes the start of the most amazing time in her life.

I enjoyed the book twice before I decided to look it up online. I found its official website, along with Jennifer Weiner's weblog. I e-mailed her to tell her that I think she did a wonderful job on "Good In Bed" and that I hoped her new novel, "In Her Shoes," would get to the Philippines soon.

I received two e-mails. The first one was a long auto-reply giving me updates about her new book tour and the second was a personal e-mail to me, where Jennifer thanked me for writing and said that she hopes "In Her Shoes" reaches our bookstores soon. We never really corresponded regularly although I did write her a short congratulatory note just now. I just found out that HBO will be coming out with a series based on "Good In Bed," to be handled by "Sex and the City's" executive producer, Jenny Bicks. I can't wait to see it.

It is absolutely wonderful to be able to connect, even just digitally, with people who have flourished in the world of words, the world I am most passionate about. Getting to know even just a tad bit more about the lives of authors whose books I love is a high, especially since I get the information directly from them.

Now if only Matt LeBlanc and Alanis Morissette would write back.

E-mail the author at ppastor@inquirer.com.ph

Know the dos

and don'ts

of collecting

celebrity

scribbles

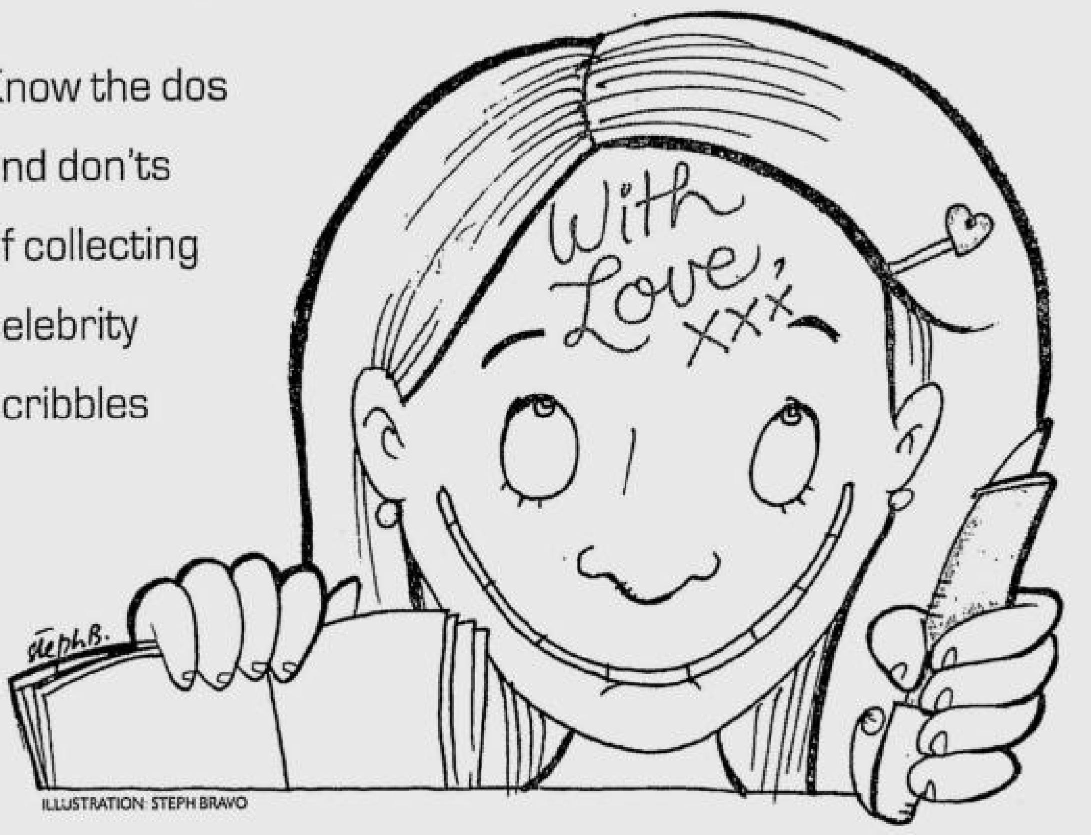


ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

Guide to collecting *autographs*

By Catherine Young
2bU! Correspondent

IF you're currently in possession of any signed document, manuscript, or even an old grocery list of a famous person, think twice before giving it away. The financial value of autographs has sometimes been underestimated. What many don't know is that the doodles of celebrities can be bought for outrageous prices. And with the dawn of Internet auction sites such as eBay, it has become easier to buy and sell these priceless signatures.

Signature scribbles

The more commercially viable autographs are those of people in the fields of politics, arts, entertainment, literature and sports. Getting the signature of someone we admire is almost like keeping a part of that person. Its worth increases as our admiration and our respect increase, and, like all collectibles, its value is relative.

Signatures of politicians and historical figures are definitely worth more than the doodles of your random boy band member. For instance, the signed court documents of St. Joan of Arc are arguably the most valuable existing autographs in history, amounting to millions of dollars. Presidential signatures are also valuable, although it is sad to know that signatures of their assassins are sold for higher prices simply because of the law of supply and demand. (Presidents sign documents almost every day; criminals don't usually give autographs on a daily basis.)

Autographs of people in the fields of art, entertainment and literature are also worth collecting. It is better if you get a signed copy of the person's work, rather than get a signed piece of tissue paper. Not only do you have the person's signature, you also have something that exemplifies his mark on his chosen field. Once, I was able to purchase a slightly worn, autographed first edition of Anne Rice's "Lasher." The signature makes the book more valuable.

The value of a celebrity's signature goes up if that famous person is already dead. As the demand for his autograph increases through time, so does its rarity. It is no wonder then, that the most valuable autograph in the world belongs to William Shakespeare. Only six known authenticated samples exist, and each can sell for at least $5 million or roughly P265 million.

How to get autographs

Now that you have an idea of the commercial and personal value of an autograph, find out how to get one. Book and CD signings, plays, movie premieres and concerts are the events to go to for those who are less than confident in approaching a celebrity. Or asking for a famous person's autograph without making a scene is a good approach.

If you're a fan of someone who isn't approachable, does not appear in public, or is shielded by dozens of bodyguards, you can send a letter or e-mail of request. In some cases, it decreases the risk of rejection and embarrassment, especially since the more famous celebrities make it a part of their to-do list. Many websites are also devoted to the buying, selling and trading of autographs.

Of fakes and forgeries

However, with such long-distance methods, there's the risk of not getting an authentic signature. Serious collectors even advise not to trust certificates of authenticity. Forged autographs involve shaky handwriting, as well as penmanship with lines that are all of the same thickness. Also, busy celebrities may hire people to sign photos for them. Remember that no two signatures are exactly the same, so when in possession of an autograph, check out the Net and compare the signature with an authenticated one. Other fakes include preprints (photocopies of the original) and rubber-stamped signatures, both of which are relatively easy to detect.

Storage

Moisture and fungi are the two major enemies of your precious collectibles. For signatures on paper, have them framed or keep them in a clear book instead of gluing them on a scrapbook. For autographs written on more three-dimensional objects, prop them up on a shelf with the signature facing you. As much as possible, store them in such a way that innocent bystanders or well-meaning house helpers won't mistake them for something that should be polished, or worse, thrown away.

Whether you choose to collect autographs for their monetary value or simply for personal sentiments, celebrity scribbles will, hopefully, inspire you.

Fatal admiration

By Armin Adina

If you've got a million fans, that could mean about 20,000 prospective stalkers

POP idol Britney Spears asked the Los Angeles Supreme Court in December to issue a restraining order against Masahiko Shizawa, a 41-year-old Japanese whom the singer accused of stalking her since last September.

The 21-year-old Spears claimed Shizawa, of Yokohama, Japan, followed and attempted to contact her at her Los Angeles home, as well as in two other residences outside California. The Japanese sent photos of himself along with notes reading: "I'm chasing you." He even showed up at the singer's home, refusing to leave when ordered off the property.

In her complaint, Spears asked the court to bar Shizawa from coming within 1,000 feet of her and from contacting her in any way.

The case is just one of several where fans exceed the limits of acceptable expressions of admiration. Fame and fortune not only result in some loss of privacy. They can also create some risk to life.

In the mid-90s, Robert Hoskins started to hound Madonna. The homeless man insisted he was the pop icon's husband and even threatened to kill her bodyguard for keeping her away from him. This prompted the singer's bodyguard to carry a gun.

Despite the tighter security, Hoskins managed to sneak into the superstar's residence several times. It was reported he even got to within 10 feet of Madonna. At one time, Hoskins threw his bags over the estate's wall. When bodyguards confronted him, he "fired" both bodyguards before walking away.

Later that day, the bodyguards found Hoskins in the pool. A scuffle ensued and the intruder was shot twice. During Hoskins trial, Madonna testified he even threatened to kill her for rejecting his marriage proposal. Hoskins was sentenced to 10 years in prison.

Tragic results

Some cases of stalking had tragic consequences. In 1989, Rebecca Schaeffer of the television sitcom "My Sister Sam" was shot dead by Roberto Bardo at the door of her apartment. Bardo said Schaeffer's personality sparked his interest and he felt like he knew her.

Getting her address from computer databanks, he paced for hours before approaching the TV actress, who went out to pick up a script delivered to her. Bardo was turned away making him more agitated. He returned and shot her pointblank without uttering a single word.

Schaeffer's murder finally made the public realize the serious risks faced by celebrities from crazed fans like Bardo. After the actress' death, ways to deal with such threats were developed in the United States. The Los Angeles Police Department set up the Threat Management Unit composed of eight full-time detectives to investigate celebrity stalking.

Prior to Schaeffer's killings, one of the most sensational cases of celebrity stalking ending in tragedy was the shooting of John Lennon in 1980. The former Beatle was gunned down by Mark David Chapman, who just got the singer's autograph, as the singer left his apartment building in New York City.

An 'inspiration'

The senseless killing "inspired" future stalkers.

Latin sensation Selena, "Queen of Tejano," died in the hands of the president of her own fans' club, Yolanda Saldivar. The fan was also the singer's best friend for a time. Saldivar, who was convicted of the crime, claimed she shot the singer by accident while trying to commit suicide.

Icelandic singer Björk has the London police to thank for a new lease on life. The singer was sent an acid bomb by an admirer, which the police intercepted.

Ricardo Lopez of Miami reportedly was disappointed that Björk dated a black man. After mailing the package, Lopez shaved, played a Björk tape, and blew his head off with a pistol so he could "be with her in the afterlife." The disturbed fan even made a video of his suicide and fantasies about killing her.

Stars are not the only ones bothered by fanatics. Film director Steven Spielberg was threatened by an obsessed man who wanted to rape him.

Jonathan Norman, who was convicted of stalking, was caught with a "rape kit" near Spielberg's home in July 1997. The kit consisted of duct tape, handcuffs and utility knife. The man also had photographs of the director, his wife and seven children. Security was increased in Spielberg's sets and home while Norman pursued him.

During the trial, the district attorney revealed that Norman intended to tie up the director's wife and make her watch him handcuff and rape Spielberg.

Sports fans, too

With players becoming big celebrities as well, fans going overboard has also become a problem in sports. Top-ranked tennis player Serena Williams was stalked recently by a German fan. Albert Stromeyer of Frankfurt traveled around the globe to pursue Williams. He was arrested in the US Open last September.

Stromeyer pleaded guilty to a stalking charge in a federal court.

Martina Hingis, another tennis sensation, received bizarre calls and faxes from a fan. Security had to be beefed up during the Swisscom Challenge in 1999 to avert threats to her life.

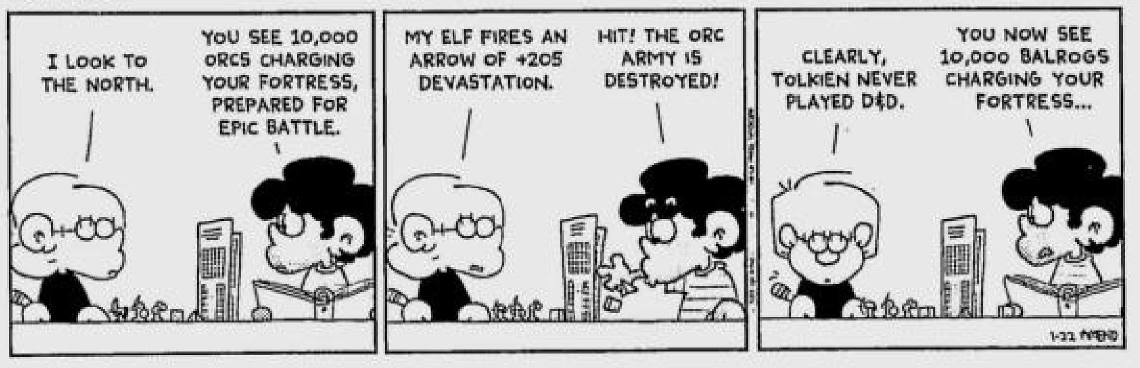
Another tennis superstar, Monica Seles, had a to cope with an enraged fan, not hers but fellow tennis player Steffi Graf's. The Graf fan stabbed Seles in the back. Seles had to take a break from the tennis circuit for more than two years to recuperate. The fan was sentenced to two years in jail.

Some Filipino stars have also started to be bothered by overly adoring fans. MTV Asia VJ Donita Rose, who is also a television/movie star and commercial model, was harassed by a guy who called her in the middle of the night. After he called some 10 times, she decided to talk to him. Rose said it was hard because she wanted her fans know she appreciated them.

Studies indicate that only around 2 percent of fans exhibit a tendency for outrage. But if you've got a million admirers, that could mean about 20,000 prospective stalkers.

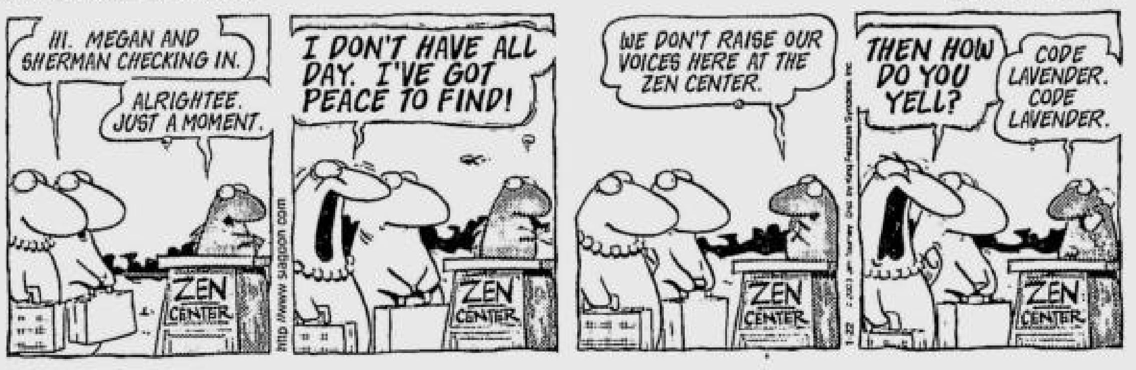
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


I LOOK TO THE NORTH.
YOU SEE 10,000 ORCS CHARGING YOUR FORTRESS, PREPARED FOR EPIC BATTLE.
MY ELF FIRES AN ARROW OF +205 DEVASTATION.
HIT! THE ORC ARMY IS DESTROYED!
CLEARLY, TOLKIEN NEVER PLAYED D&D.
YOU NOW SEE 10,000 BALROGS CHARGING YOUR FORTRESS...
1-22 AMEND

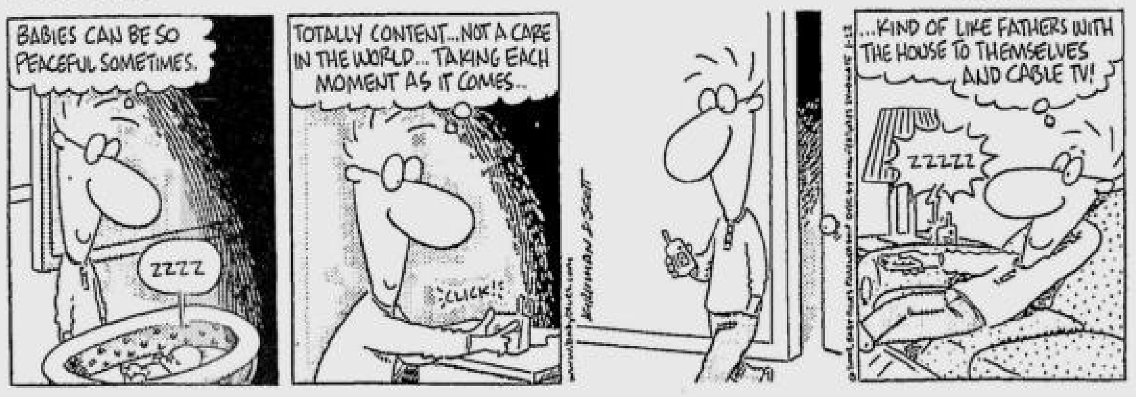
SHERMAN'S LAGOON

BY JIM TOOMEY


HI. MEGAN AND SHERMAN CHECKING IN.
ALRIGHTEE. JUST A MOMENT.
I DON'T HAVE ALL DAY. I'VE GOT PEACE TO FIND!
WE DON'T RAISE OUR VOICES HERE AT THE ZEN CENTER.
THEN HOW DO YOU YELL?
CODE LAVENDER. CODE LAVENDER.
ZEN CENTER
http://www.slagoon.com

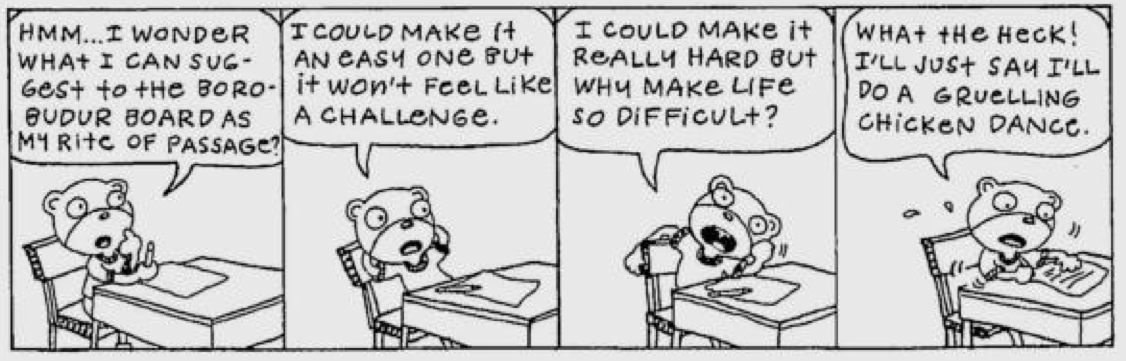
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


BABIES CAN BE SO PEACEFUL SOMETIMES.
ZZZZ
TOTALLY CONTENT...NOT A CARE IN THE WORLD... TAKING EACH MOMENT AS IT COMES...
CLICK!
...KIND OF LIKE FATHERS WITH THE HOUSE TO THEMSELVES AND CABLE TV!
ZZZZZ

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BYLYRA GARCELLANO


HMM...I WONDER WHAT I CAN SUGGEST to the BOROBUDUR BOARD AS MY RITE OF PASSAGE?
I COULD MAKE IT AN EASY ONE BUT IT WON'T FEEL LIKE A CHALLENGE.
I COULD MAKE IT REALLY HARD BUT WHY MAKE LIFE SO DIFFICULT?
WHAT THE HECK! I'LL JUST SAY I'LL DO A GRUELLING CHICKEN DANCE.

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Steve Perry, Linda Blair, John Hurt, Diane Lane

Happy Birthday: Your outgoing personality will lead you to people who can make a difference in your life. The more accepting you are, the better. Your talents will unfold in an unusual way and because of this, you will gain recognition and praise. Your numbers are 5, 19, 27, 35, 40, 47

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Stay cool and don't let the little things going on around you get you all worked up. Keep busy. You will be in a high-energy cycle, so focus on a purpose.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Rely on yourself if you want things done properly. Concentrate on your own projects and refuse to get involved in what doesn't concern you. Physical activity will keep you calm.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Don't be afraid to make advances if there is someone that interests you. Your versatility coupled with your creative imagination will attract a lot of attention.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Refuse to put up with any unfair treatment. You will enjoy yourself the most if you do things that will make you feel good or that can help you relax. A little pampering will go a long way.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): You will have good experiences if you do things with close friends. The conversations alone will be interesting and help you make a decision about your future.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): It's a good day for a creative project. Someone with experience will give you good tips, but be prepared to face opposition from a know-it-all.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Preparation will be the key today. Expect to face a challenge. You have what it takes to surpass any obstacle. Your ability to follow through on your actions will be impressive.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Calculated moves will put you in a key position. Do some investigating regarding an investment that interests you.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Taking on too much will result in slim profits and little progress. Your inability to tell someone that you don't want to see them any longer will be your downfall. Be honest.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Your ideas regarding residential moves or changes may be upsetting to those you live with. Focus on business and moneymaking opportunities for best results today.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): If someone approaches you with a partnership proposal, you may want to think twice and evaluate what this person can honestly contribute. You can make money if you invest in yourself.

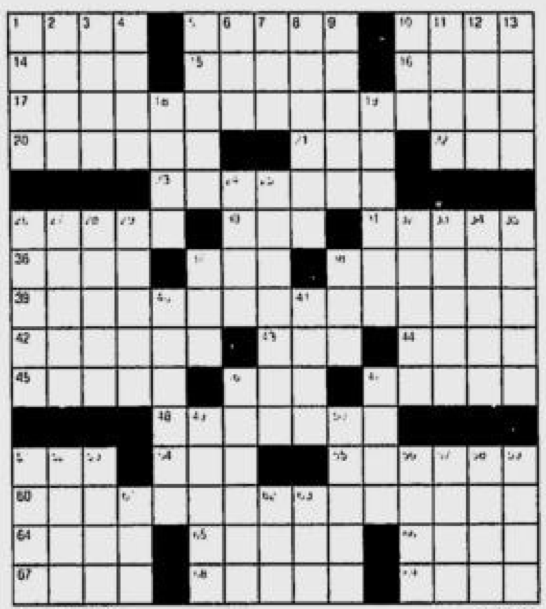
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): You've been trying to do too much. Take care of any health problems and spend time with the people who mean the most to you.

Birthday Baby: You will be serious about life and your purpose. You will be curious, thoughtful and engaging when it comes to dealing with others. You will make a difference because you care.

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Zhivago's love
5 Ear bone
10 Install, as software
14 Coll. subj.
15 Daring feat
16 Brink
17 Account for your behavior!
20 Rejection
21 Bullring bravo
22 Bigwig in D.C.
23 Flier
26 Bonheur and Parks
30 Mtn. stat
31 Slap on the buttocks
36 Exploits
37 Writer Levin
38 Fisher of "Star Wars"
39 Anything necessary
42 Flynn and others
43 Those elected
44 Gaming cubes
45 Backward: pref.
46 Porch raider
47 __ Island, NY
48 Trelliswork passageway
51 Speedy jet
54 Unit of work
55 __ Newton-John
60 Why are you so surprised?
64 Top-notch
65 Shuts forcefully
66 Flower support
67 Arizona city
68 Lanchester and Schiaparelli
69 Exxon, once

DOWN
1 Lascivious
2 Sore spot
3 Colorful mount
4 Con
5 Weaver's fiber
6 To the _ degree
7 Stage prompt
8 Open a latch
9 Subway gate
10 Luau wear
11 Track info
12 "A Death in the Family" author
13 School official
18 Mineo and Maglie
19 Reaches
24 Swiss river
25 Bursting into flame
26 More crude
27 Earthy color
28 Initiate
29 "The Maltese Falcon" co-star Mary
32 Madrid museum
33 "Catch-22" star
34 Family member
35 Writer Ken
37 Med. feeders
38 $ percentages
40 Took flight to unite
41 Centerward
46 Former Scottish county
47 Crumbly metal residue
49 Irregularly notched
50 Very fertile loam
51 Did the crawl
52 Oxford or brogue
53 Soaks up rays
56 dixit
57 Amer. Legion members
58 Freezes
59 Sphere starter?
61 Darjeeling or oolong
62 W. Hemisphere grp.
63 Ms. Thurman



By Jim Page
New York, NY

1/22/03

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

S	H	A	D		A	L	O	H	A		C	U	S	S
C	A	M	E		T	U	T	O	R		A	B	L	E
R	I	P	E		W	A	I	S	T		R	O	A	D
A	L	L		H	O	U	S	F	D	E	B	A	T	E
G	E	Y	S	E	R	S			E	M	O	T	E	R
			A	L	S		R	E	C	O	N			
P	O	C	K	E	T	V	E	T	O			B	O	S
T	W	A	I	N		A	P	U		D	A	I	L	Y
A	I	P			F	I	L	I	B	U	S	T	F	R
			A	G	O	N	Y		A	R	S			
S	H	I	N	E	R			A	N	A	T	O	M	Y
C	O	N	G	R	E	S	S	M	A	N		X	I	I
A	S	T	O		M	I	L	A	N		L	I	T	E
D	E	E	R		E	L	I	Z	A		O	D	E	L
S	A	R	A		N	O	D	E	S		N	E	R	D

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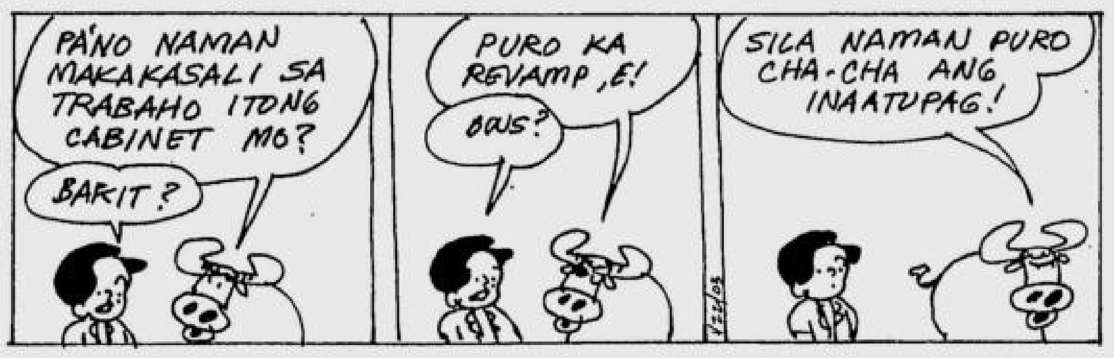
1/22/03

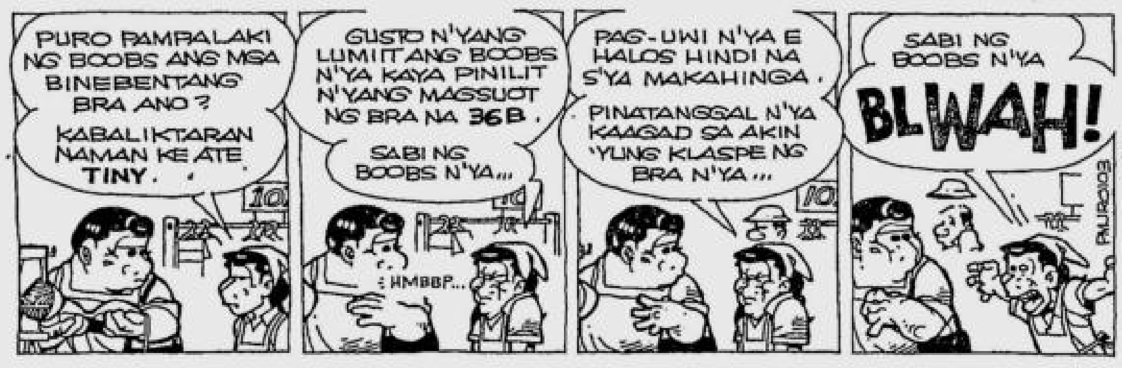
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


PA'NO NAMAN MAKAKASALI SA TRABAHO ITONG CABINET MO?
BAKIT?
PURO KA REVAMP, E!
OWS?
SILA NAMAN PURO CHA-CHA ANG INAATUPAG!
1-22-03

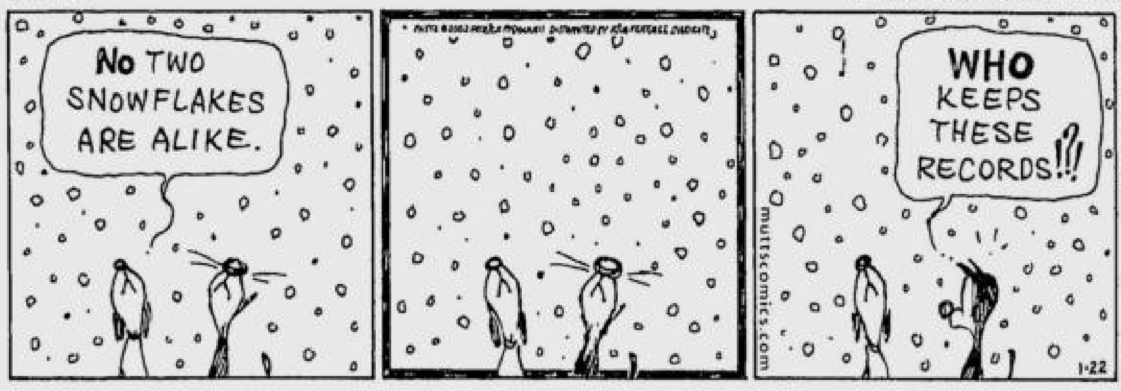
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


PURO PAMPALAKI NG BOOBS ANG MGA BINEBENTANG BRA ANO?
KABALIKTARAN NAMAN KE ATE TINY.
GUSTO N'YANG LUMIIT ANG BOOBS N'YA KAYA PINILIT N'YANG MAGSUOT NG BRA NA 36B.
SABI NG BOOBS N'YA...
HMBBP...
PAG-UWI N'YA E HALOS HINDI NA S'YA MAKAHINGA.
PINATANGGAL N'YA KAAGAD SA AKIN 'YUNG KLASPE NG BRA N'YA...
SABI NG BOOBS N'YA
BLWAH!
PAURO103

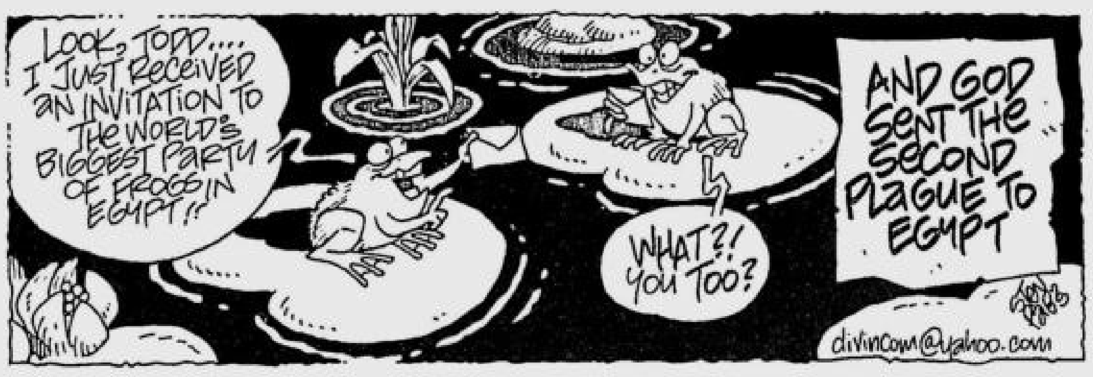
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


No TWO SNOWFLAKES ARE ALIKE.
WHO KEEPS THESE RECORDS!?!
muttscomics.com
1-22

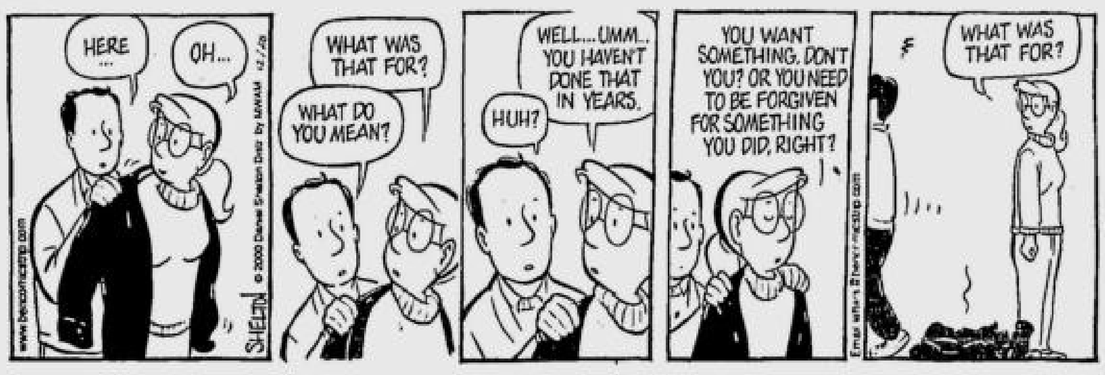
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


LOOK, TODD.... I JUST RECEIVED AN INVITATION TO THE WORLD'S BIGGEST PARTY OF FROGS IN EGYPT!!
WHAT?! YOU TOO?
AND GOD SENT THE SECOND PLAGUE TO EGYPT
divincom@yahoo.com

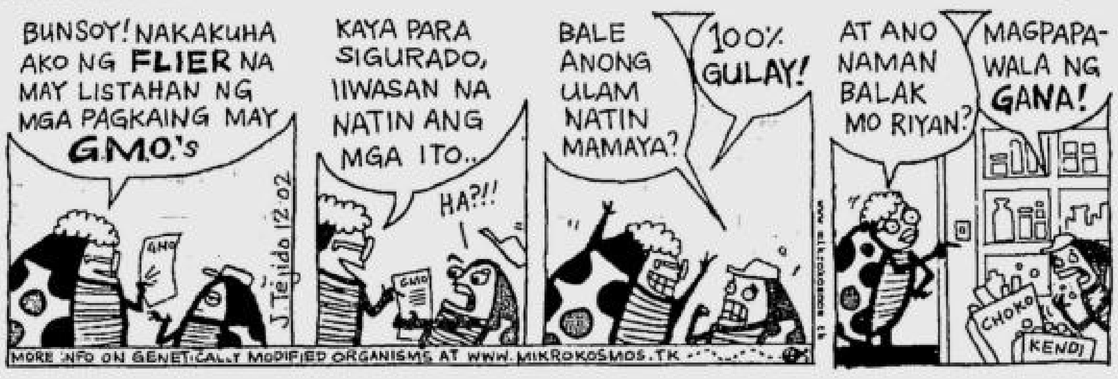
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


HERE ...
OH...
WHAT WAS THAT FOR?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
HUH?
WELL....UMM.. YOU HAVEN'T DONE THAT IN YEARS.
YOU WANT SOMETHING, DON'T YOU? OR YOU NEED TO BE FORGIVEN FOR SOMETHING YOU DID, RIGHT?
WHAT WAS THAT FOR?
SHELTON
www.bencomicstrip.com

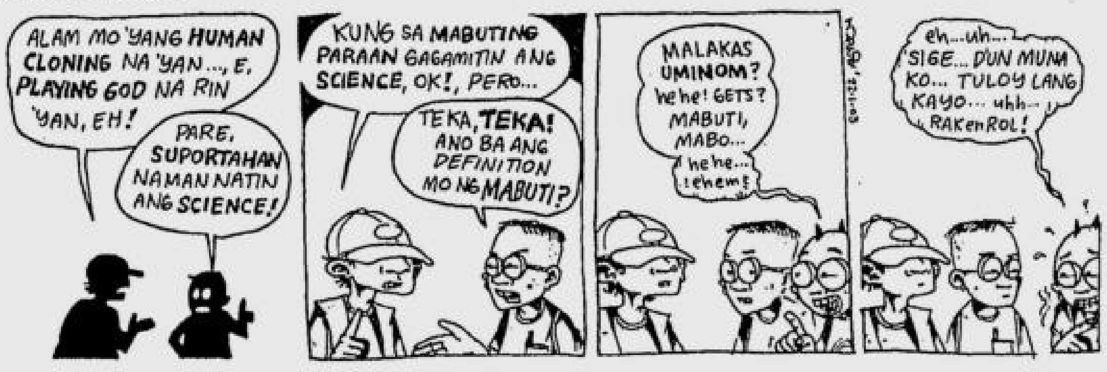
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


BUNSOY! NAKAKUHA AKO NG FLIER NA MAY LISTAHAN NG MGA PAGKAING MAY G.M.O.'s
KAYA PARA SIGURADO, IIWASAN NA NATIN ANG MGA ITO..
HA?!!
BALE ANONG ULAM NATIN MAMAYA?
100% GULAY!
AT ANO NAMAN BALAK MO RIYAN?
MAGPAPAWALA NG GANA!
CHOKO
KENDI
J. Tejido 12.02
MORE INFO ON GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS AT WWW.MIKROKOSMOS.TK

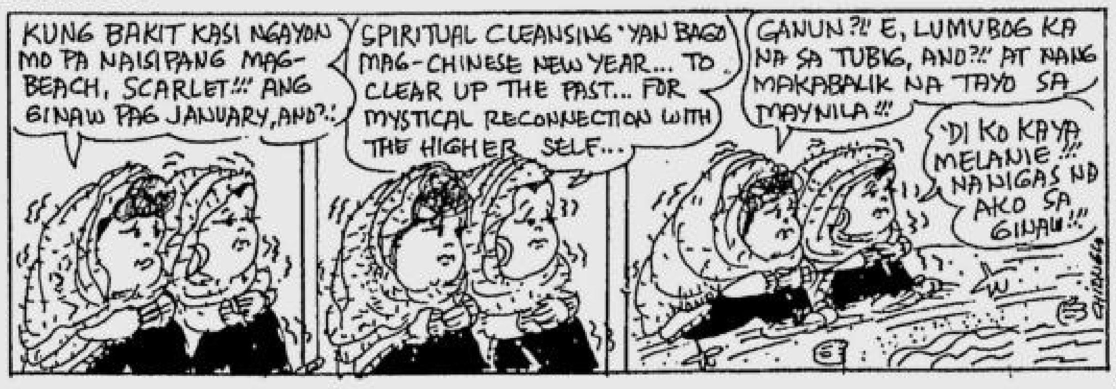
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


ALAM MO 'YANG HUMAN CLONING NA 'YAN..., E, PLAYING GOD NA RIN 'YAN, EH!
PARE, SUPORTAHAN NAMAN NATIN ANG SCIENCE!
KUNG SA MABUTING PARAAN GAGAMITIN ANG SCIENCE, OK!, PERO...
TEKA, TEKA! ANO BA ANG DEFINITION MO NG MABUTI?
MALAKAS UMINOM? he'he! GETS? MABUTI, MABO... he'he... ehem!
eh...uh... SIGE... DUN MUNA KO... TULOY LANG KAYO... uhh... RAKenROL!

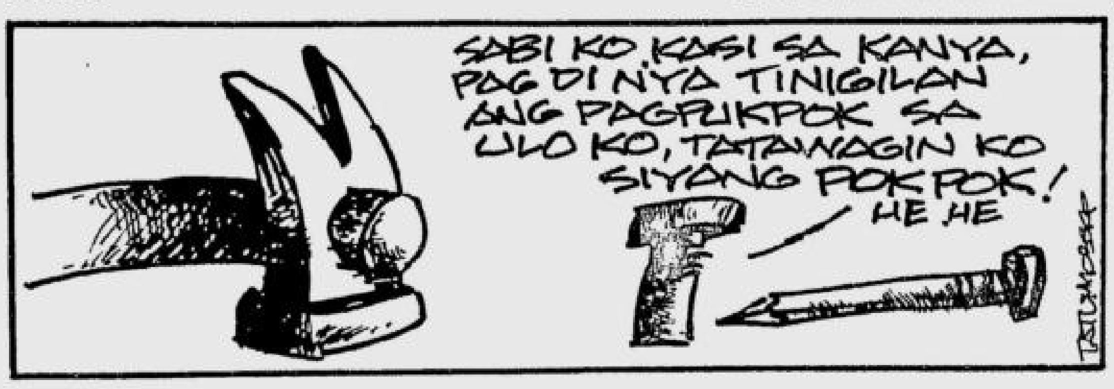
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


KUNG BAKIT KASI NGAYON MO PA NAISIPANG MAG-BEACH, SCARLET!!! ANG GINAW PAG JANUARY, AND?!
SPIRITUAL CLEANSING 'YAN BAGO MAG-CHINESE NEW YEAR... TO CLEAR UP THE PAST... FOR MYSTICAL RECONNECTION WITH THE HIGHER SELF...
GANUN?!! E, LUMUBOG KA NA SA TUBIG, AND?!! AT NANG MAKABALIK NA TAYO SA MAYNILA!!!
'DI KO KAYA MELANIE!!! NANIGAS NA AKO SA GINAW!!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


SABI KO KASI SA KANYA, PAG DI N'YA TINIGILAN ANG PAGPUKPOK SA ULO KO, TATAWAGIN KO SIYANG POKPOK!
HE HE
TATUMBSAP

INDUSTRY WINK. Miko Palanca and Sarah Meier

MARDI GRACE. Bianca Gonzales and Cesca Litton

NOT BRAD. Twin bro Greg Turvey with hot date

RED corner with Paolo Cabalfin and Chinggay Andrada

AJMA GRAS. Linfred Yap and Cindy Mabasa

RHYTHM JIVE. Rada with Steve Mills at Industry

KC AND HIS SUNSHINE. KC Montero and Geneva Cruz

A LIST. Anna Shier is hot, hot, hot.

Overboard and underground

ALIKABOK STARS. Waya Gallardo, Jeff Hidalgo and Cris Villonco at Industry

BLUE EAGLES SOAR. Janice de Belen with schoolmates Jade and Marie at the Rockwell shindig

CANDID MOMENTS. Gen, JM Rodriguez, Rachel Alejandro, Lee Robin Salazar and Junjie of Velcro band

WEEKEND warriors hip-hopping from one hot event to another—from themed shebang to nouveau club listing—here's the scoop on the scene.

For starters, Rockwell is putting up a stand against recreational giant Greenbelt. Last Saturday, Yaparazzi stopped by the Lopez compound and was pleasantly surprised to find the strip up, up and awake, with an acid jazz band situated around the Seattle's Best and Mati areas, serenading the crowd that was sprawled al fresco around the street.

Another reason? In the "Mardi Gras Shindig" (a Mardi Gras on a Saturday? Now that's something) by the Ateneo Junior Marketing Association (AJMA), the Eagles spread their wings all over Rockwell. Students had Mardi Gras baubles, bangles and beads all over them. Stiltwalkers, fire eaters, banners and booths added to the festive flair, not to mention the windy weather that gave the event the added oomph that night.

Tim Yap

My style radar was on, trying to spot the next "it" girls and boys of the scene. And there were a lot. There were **Bianca Gonzales,** whose effortless ease spells fresh, fresh, fresh, and **Erin Campos,** who looks like a young **Jacklyn Smith.** Both were part of the show that Sari-Sari staged with TechnoMarine that sexy Saturday night, with **Joey Mead** picking out the grand prix for the raffle.

Speaking of Joey Mead, she is back in town fixing her papers for mod fashion queendom. The reason? No less than Wilhelmina Models signed her up to a two-year contract. She will be based in LA where she will shuttle between the City of Angels and the Big Apple for modeling jobs. So after conquering the Asian mannequin scene, she is set to conquer the US.

Industry insider

From there, I headed toward Filmore, away from central Makati, off to KC Montero's club near Cash and Carry—on1362 Filmore Street.

"Why there?" some curious partyphiles asked.

"Industry," it said in bold steel letters with a red brick wall façade that seemed to glisten more brightly with the full moon as backdrop.

Cars lined the whole strip as revelers filled the new club. "It looks like a club in Soho," said scenester **JM Rodriguez.**

Divided into three halls, Industry gives you that relaxed underground vibe. One hall houses the R&B guys and dolls as they raise the roof on the dance floor. The main hallway has couches lined along its brick corridors. The third hall has a chill-out set that is perfect for boozing and schmoozing—different scenes, one big picture of hip, hip, and more hip.

"We just had 'Spoken Word' poetry sessions earlier and plan to have alternative theater and art houses here, aside from our R&B hip-hop tribe," KC said in a hushed tone as he looked around and checked out how his club and his guests were enjoying the vibe.

"We still have a lot to do," the new club owner and MTV veejay said.

The crowd was composed of hot, hot scenesters, glitz-biz personalities, glam hip-hoppers —everybody young, hip and happening.

But, really, what's great about this place is the location. Its being "off-the-beaten track" gives it that underground edge that Manila nightlife so needs.

The would-be success of Industry (and the others to follow) would signal the maturity of Manila's nocturnal scene. I really think KC and partners have a gold mine in this new club. So, guys, keep the fire burning.

industry
lounge
DOWNTOWN chic, hip vibe

Cher reigns!

The most radiant that night at the Industry opening, aside of course from KC and **Geneva Cruz,** was hot couple of the moment **Cher Calvin** and **Troy Montero.**

Cher was smiling ear to ear with excitement. And why? Lest you think that Yaparazzi has turned into a gossip column, I just want to be the first one to congratulate our favorite New York *balikbayan*, for she is off to Las Vegas, where no less than Fox Network got her services to do a show with **Robin Leach** (yes, of "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous" fame).

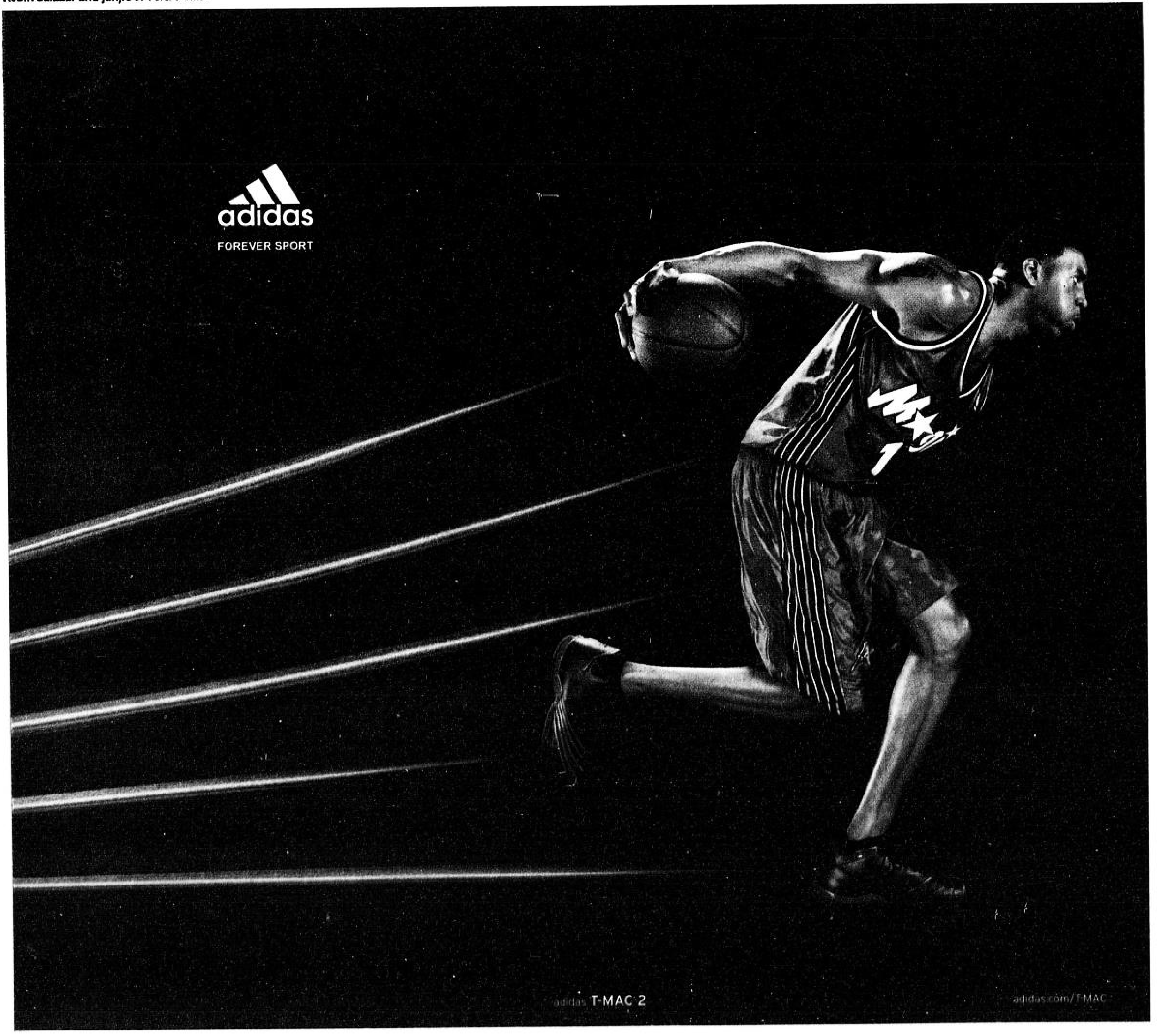
With five shows tucked under her belt, from newscasts to talk shows and magazine shows, she brings with her a plethora of experiences that will surely be useful for her world domination. (Mwahaha!).

At the peak of her career, love and life, Cher is packing her bags and will be based in the US once again starting next month.

"I feel so sad to leave. Manila is the greatest highlight of my life." Cher told us in a bittersweet tone.

Cheers to you, Cher!

FOXY. Cher Calvin is off to Vegas for Fox Network. Here seen whispering sweet somethings to Troy Montero



Bend of the road for **Boyz II Men**

By Maui V. Reyes
2bU! Correspondent

YOU must have a heart made of stone if you didn't swoon to any of the ballads of Boyz II Men. Who could forget "End of the Road" and that irresistible tear-jerker, "On Bended Knee"?

It has been three years since the release of their sleeper album, "Nathan Michael Shawn Wanya," and their greatest hits collection, and the group has finally come up with its sixth studio album under Arista Records, "Full Circle," a 14-track album packed with the ballads we know and love, as well as new up-tempo dance hits that can get your booty movin' and groovin' before you can say, "Top 40!"

Produced by Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis (who helped cowrite "On Bended Knee"), the album has already released two singles, "The Color of Love" and "Oh Well," both slowly climbing the charts.

And it won't be long before you hear a Boyz II Men song blasting nonstop on FM radio. After numerous one-hit-wonder (or no-hit wonder) boy bands and pop acts coming over to belt out out-of-tune songs, Boyz II Men will be serenading The Fort (and everyone else lucky enough to score a ticket) on Valentine's Day with their heart-pounding, tear-inducing ballads and harmonies.

2bU! was lucky enough to have a chat with Shawn Stockman of the band when he called on 2bU!'s favorite radio station, Magic 89.9, to talk about the music industry, growing up, and what he expects from the band's Valentine's gig in Manila.

It has been three years since the release of your last album, not counting your "Greatest Hits." What have you been doing since then?

We've been basically just trying to maintain and keep ourselves together in this crazy music business. The industry is really crazy, and it's crazier now than it was three years ago. And it's gotten rough for artists, established and new. We have just been trying not to get too caught up in this whirlwind in the industry. You know, with the MP3 download stuff and the record companies taking financial hits, [these troubles] trickle down to the employees, which are us. So we were just staying in our position, trying not to do anything too rash or too harsh that would kill ourselves.

You were under Universal before. What brought about the change from Universal to Arista?

Just creative changes. Universal was going one direction, and Boyz II Men were going another, and we mutually agreed that what was best for us and for them was to make a split. The music industry is changing so much and it's taking such a different phase now, that outside, as artists, we always try to reinvent ourselves and try to find ourselves outside. After an album or two, we always try to do something different. I think the industry in itself is in a mode of having a face-lift as well. And labels are starting to figure out what they need to do and what they're trying to do and how they want to change. Every record label is in this transition right now. So the change of label was mutual, it was all good. It wasn't a bitter split at all.

The R&B act behind the hits 'On Bended Knee' and 'End of the Road' is coming out of a three-year hiatus wiser and a little more soulful

And that reunited you with producer L.A. Reid again, right?

Yeah. L.A. Reid helped cowrite "End of the Road," and we felt like it made sense to go that route because L.A. Reid has such a history. And he has always mentioned that he wanted to work with us on this type of level, so we thought that made the best sense.

How much have you grown as a person and as an artist since the release of your first album?

I've grown personally, enormously. I mean, emotionally, spiritually, physically, mentally. I've developed so much. When I first got into this business, and the rest of the guys will tell you this—I was the quietest dude in the group. I wouldn't make a peep, and the only times when you heard me talk was when doing an interview or if I was onstage singing. And in the industry, because it's so tough and because we love it so much, you couldn't help but develop a thick skin. It has made me a lot stronger, and I thank the industry for that. I wouldn't be the type of person I am now if I didn't go through the things I went through.

You said that the market for music is so wide, and there's not just one kind of market out there. But do you personally think there's some kind of competition right now?

I guess you could say there has always been an underlying competition among record companies. As far as the chart positions are concerned, people are choosing what they want to hear at this point, and the Avril Lavignes and the Eminems and the Nellys and all those other acts are the ones that are capturing the public's attention. The public prefers to listen to this type of music right now, and tomorrow it's going to be something totally different. And then the competition will grow from that point. So it's always changing and it flips, because people's tastes always change.

You guys have toured a lot and I'm sure you've got a lot of good tour stories.

We don't have, like, off-the-wall, off-the-hook tour stories. None of us do drugs, none of us have taken cocaine, or any crazy stuff like that. We would go to clubs and go partying and do things, you know, boys would do, being new and going out on the road and experiencing life and things. But nothing really crazy, nothing bananas that you'd see on VH1's "Behind the Music."

Nothing bordering on Marilyn Manson, I guess.

Yeah, no Ozzy Osbourne or Motley Crue stuff. None of that junk. Outside of the things a bunch of guys do on tour, there's nothing else really bananas that went on tour. We don't want to get caught up in that mess; we're not good at handling scandals.

What are your expectations for your Manila gig?

We hope that everybody enjoys. I know a lot of people expect to hear the ballads and the songs that we're most known for, but we're also going to do a lot of up-tempos and things like that. On top of singing the records, we're very loose and very comfortable and relaxed on stage. We want people to feel the same way. We don't want people to just sit down, cross their legs and just listen to us sing. There's nothing fun about that. We want everybody to let loose, man! It's our first time in the Philippines, and we want to have fun. We expect you guys to enjoy yourselves, because we're going to be enjoying ourselves!

Celebrate Valentine with Boyz II Men in Manila

IMAGINE spending your Valentine's evening with your loved one being serenaded by the the soulful voices of Boyz II Men. Imagine not having to shell out a single peso for this once-in-a-lifetime chance.

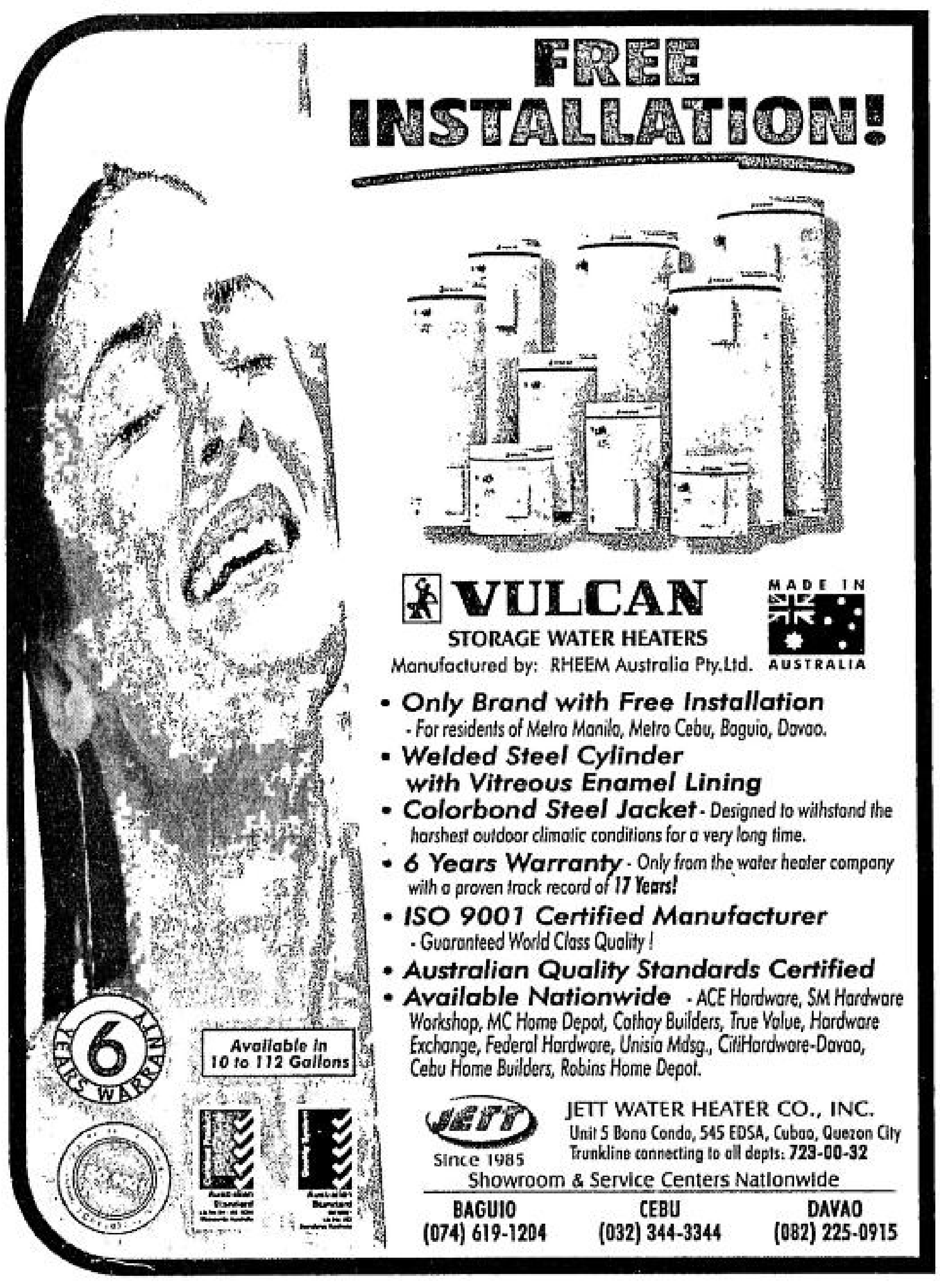
You don't have to settle for just imagining.

2BU! readers will get a chance to bring their dates to the most romantic concert in Manila this year. All you have to do is send in your favorite Boyz II Men song that best describes your love story and tell us why you chose that song.

Send your entries, along with a picture of you and your loved one, to contest2bu@inquirer.com.ph or to 2bU! Contest, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City. Don't forget to include your name, age, school/office and contact information.

2bU! will choose one winner each week for four weeks. Each winner will receive two tickets to the Boyz II Men concert, which is presented by Jag Jeans and Close-Up.

Contest runs Jan. 22-Feb. 12.



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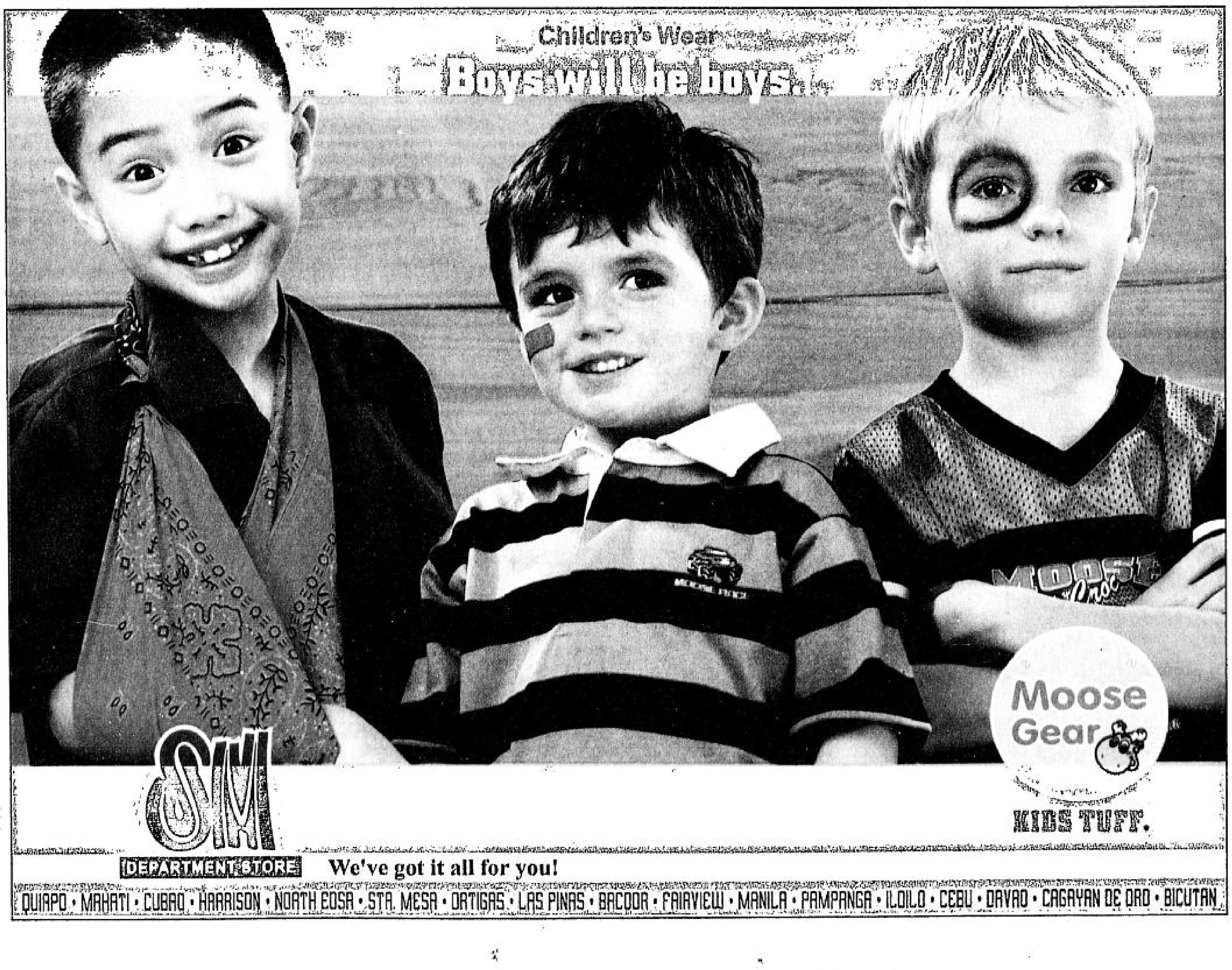

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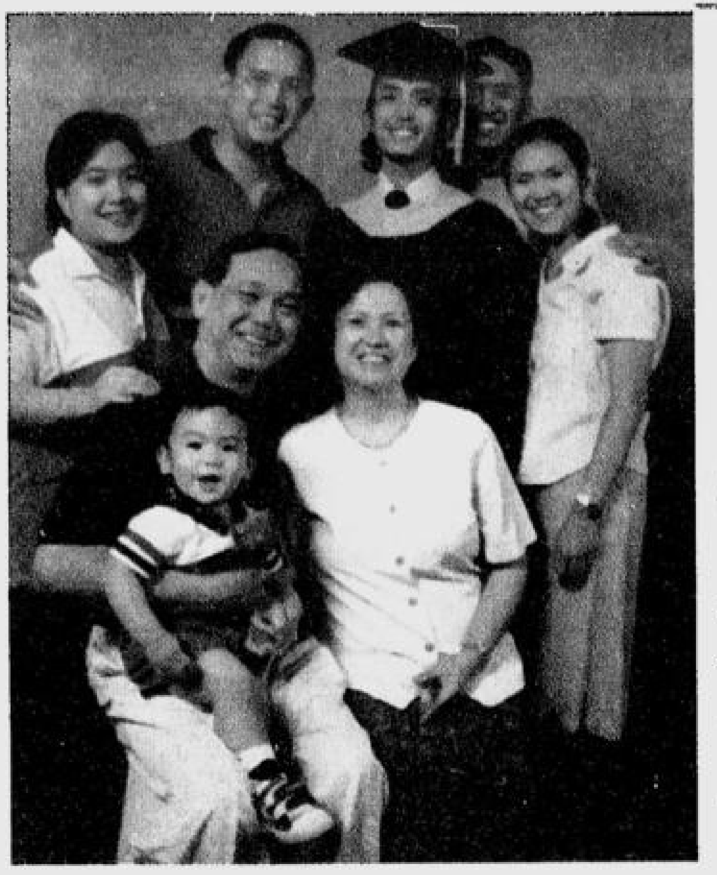
4th WORLD MEETING OF FAMILIES

January 22 to 26, 2003

Good News for Christian families for the Third Millennium

FAMILY/D2



A truly Asian and Filipino welcome

THE PHILIPPINES welcomes thousands of delegates from all over the world to the 4th World Meeting of Families in January 2003. This is a singular event for this only Christian nation in Asia and the Far East, the country specifically chosen by the Holy Father Pope John Paul II as the venue of this international gathering of families to celebrate the Good News of Christ's love.

The 4th World Meeting of Families in Manila will be a grand fiesta replete with the warmth and hospitality that are distinctively Asian and Filipino.

To families of the world: Welcome to the Philippines *Mabuhay*!

With deep concern for the challenges that confront Christian families in this modern world, Pope John Paul II issued the Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio* and established the Pontifical Council for the Family in 1981. He called for the First World Meeting of Families in 1994 in Rome, "the inspired fruit of the Holy Spirit." Since then the World Meeting of Families has been held every three years upon the invitation of the Holy Father, to celebrate the God-given gift that is the family and to gather families to pray, dialogue, learn, share and deepen their understanding and appreciation of how the Christian family fulfills its role as a domestic Church, the basic unit for evangelization.

In 2003 in Manila, the theme is "The Christian Family: Good News for the Third Millennium." It is a special mission for Asia because the Holy Father himself has dubbed this millennium as the "Asian millennium."

Events

There are five main events in every WMF, namely: International Theological Pastoral Congress (ITPC), Sons and Daughters Congress, Eucharistic Celebrations for Families on Pilgrimage, Festive Meeting with Testimonies from Families and the Closing Mass with the Papal Legate presiding and some 1,000 Cardinals, Bishops and Priests from all over the world concelebrating.

International Theological

ASIAN/D2

The World's Biggest Family Reunion
The 4th World Meeting of Families
January 23-26, 2003 Manila, Philippines

It's a grand reunion of all Catholic families! And as a member, come and take part in this momentous event:

January 25, 2003 (Saturday)
5:00 pm – Festive Meeting with Testimonies from Families with live Satellite Link up to Pope John Paul II in the Vatican
8:00 pm – Vigil
Venue: Quirino Grandstand, Luneta, Rizal Park

January 26, 2003 (Sunday)
7:00 am - Closing Mass of the Fourth World Meeting of Families
Presider: His Eminence Alfonso Cardinal Lopez Trujillo, Papal Legate
Concelebrants: 1000 Cardinals, Bishops, Priests
Venue: Quirino Grandstand, Luneta, Rizal Park

THE 4th WORLD MEETING OF FAMILIES
January 23–26, 2003
Manila, Philippines

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Now you're ready to play our ***Vatican Txter: Unscramble Trivia Game*** and send ***Text Blessings!***

1 *Vatican Txter: Unscramble Trivia Game*
1. Upon registration, send the keyword PLAY to 2980.
2. You will receive a trivia question along with instructions. Unscramble the word and send your answer.
3. Each text earns you a raffle entry to the weekly draws and grand draw.
4. Text charges: P2.00 for postpaid, P2.50 for prepaid.

2 *Text Blessings*
1. Upon registration, send the keyword BLESS to 2379.
2. You will receive any of the special icon blessings pictured below.
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Good News for Christian families for the Third Millennium

From page D1

"THE family is in a crisis and under subtle attacks from the inside and the outside," according to husband and wife Floro and Natalia Teresita Flores, whose family is a delegate to the 4th World Meeting of Families, which begins today.

Floro and Natalia, who has been married for 30 years, is referring to the dilemma faced by the family, the basic unit of society where values are taught and established.

Floro and Natalie :"We see ourselves as eternally engaged,"

According to the two, the family today is thriving under an environment of "materialism," "consumerism," "hedonism," "egoism" and other issues such as war and conflict.

And the 4th WMF is a very welcome event of the year not only to the Filipino families but also to families worldwide.

"It is very important because the huge gathering of Christian families from 80 countries is something that the times desperately need today—to announce to the world that the family is very much alive and millions of them remain faithful to the teachings of the Church," says Floro.

Pope John Paul II, with deep concern for the challenges that confront Christian families, established the Pontifical Council for the Family in 1981 and called for the first World Meeting of Families in 1994 in Rome.

Since then, the WMF has been held every three years upon the invitation of The Holy Father to celebrate the God-given gift that is the family. It also aims to gather families to pray, dialogue, learn, share and deepen their understanding and appreciation of how the Christian family fulfills its role as a domestic Church, the basic unit for evangelization.

The World Meeting of Families has been held twice in Rome (1994 and 2000) and in Rio de Janeiro (1997). Manila's 4th WMF theme is "The Christian Family: Good News for the Third Millennium."

Six thousand delegates from the Philippines and the different countries are participating in the five-day gathering with several activities scheduled at the Philippine International Convention Center in Roxas Blvd., and the Quirino Grandstand in Rizal Park.

Henrietta de Villa, ambassador to the Vatican and executive secretary of the 4th WMF committee says there are five main events to be participated in the delegates. The International Theological Pastoral Congress will be held on January 22 to 24 at the PICC. It aims to provide the theological framework and pastoral strategy to enable Christian families their awareness of carrying out the mission of evangelization.

Sons and Daughters Congress will allow young people to reflect on the family as "Good News" for the third millennium.

Eucharistic Celebrations for Families on Pilgrimage will be on January 25 and will be held in 15 churches in Metro Manila. Delegates will divided according to language groups and will participate in a Mass in their respective languages and dialects in the selected parishes.

Festive Meeting with Testimonies from Families (January 25, Rizal Park) allows family-participants from the five continents to express their aspirations for their families, arising from their daily experiences of joy, hope, anguish and grief.

The Papal Legate to the 4th WMF will celebrate the closing Mass on January 26 for all the delegates and Catholics from all over the Philippines. There will be a blessing of families and manifestation of the Church's commitment to the families and the families' commitment to open their doors to Christ.

The Flores family: Floro, Natalia, , Pinky, Joy and Sonny

De Villa says the Holy Father has been very much involved in the 4th WMF despite his condition and has sent his Papal Legate to the meeting. "The Holy Father said that the ideal that should prevail in our times is to form families that are united, a united family that's socially involved and morally healthy. That's the teaching of the Church, that's the teaching of God."

To the Flores couple, the forming of a Christian family rests on the conscious effort to always put God at the center of the relationship among members of the family.

"Christian family is a family that first puts God at the center of their lives. It's a family that strives to live the gospel in their daily lives," says Floro. The Floro family is an active member of Focolare, an international ecclesial movement founded in Italy that encourages people to live the gospel.

The couple went through the ups and downs of a marriage as any couple has, and in the process tried and discovered many things, such as marriage encounters. It was through Focolare that the couple "met a way of life" that they like to lead: living the gospel in their own family.

Natalia says her perception of the role of a wife and mother has changed. Before, she sees her role as an obligation—something to do and needed to be done, but when they put God into the marriage, Natalia says she does things for her family "out of love of God."

"You can stay in the house and be with the children all day, but it doesn't mean you've spent quality time with them. If there's a conscious effort on your part that being with the children and caring for them is out of love of God, then it becomes not an obligation but an act of love."

This consciousness of God in their midst doesn't "restrict" the couple's relationship with each other: "It makes us free to say 'No' to sin. It makes us feel free to say Yes to God and love," says Floro.

"Let us not look at marriage only from the human point of view—that everything will be divided 50-50 between the couple. From the divine point of view, it is a sacrament where the couple should always give 100 percent of their selves," says Floro.

The couple has three children who they raised under the love and guidance of God: Jose Bernardo (Sonny), 28, married, is a business development manager of the family's business; Flor Theresa (Pinky), 26, is currently taking up a Master's in Psychology; and Jose Antonio (Joy), 25, a computer engineer.

The couple goes to Mass every day. "We see ourselves as eternally engaged," says Natalia. "The freshness of love is still there after all these years."

A truly Asian and Filipino welcome

From page D1

Pastoral Congress (ITPC)
Jan. 22 to 24, PICC Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City

The International Theological Pastoral Congress will serve as the main venue for the theological and pastoral study and reflection on the role of the Christian families in the third millennium. The ITPC aims to provide the theological framework and pastoral strategy for enabling Christian families to heighten their awareness and understanding of how to carry out their mission of evangelization. It will also help promote greater understanding and appreciation of the teachings of the Church on issues that affect the Christian family in today's world.

The three-day congress will have the following daily themes: Day One – "The Christian Family Today: Evangelization in a Multi-Cultural and Multi-Religious World of the Third Millennium" Day Two – "Pastoral Care of the Family and Ecclesial Renewal: Evangelization Ad Intra" Day Three – "The Church, the Ecumenical Movement and the Inter-Religious Encounter: Evangelization Ad Extra"

Distinguished speakers of the Congress Cardinal Alfonso Lopez Trujillo, president of the Pontifical Council for the Family; Cardinal Crescenzio Sepe, Prefect of the Congregation of the Evangelization of Peoples; Cardinal Paul Shan Kuo-his of the Archdiocese of Kaohsiung; Cardinal Francis Arinze, Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments; Bishop Luis Antonio G. Tagle of Diocese of Imus, Bishop Teodoro C. Bacani, Spiritual Director of Federation of Transparochial Communities; Hon. Hilario Davide Jr., Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Philippines; Prof. Michael Waldstein, president of the International Theological Institute in Gaming, Austria; Dr. Carl Anderson, Supreme Knight of the Knights of Columbus; Martha Bianchi de Soto, president La Liga de Madres de Familia in Argentina; Rev. Fr. Bruno Forte, theologian and author; and Archbishop Stephen Fumio Hamao, president, Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant Peoples.

Sons and Daughters Congress
Jan. 22 to 24, PICC Roxas Boulevard

The Sons and Daughters Congress runs parallel to the ITPC and will allow young people to reflect on the family as "Good News" for the third millennium. The 4th WMF organizers in the Philippines make the gathering truly a family affair because it is open to children of fathers and mothers attending the ITPC.

Through inter-active program dynamics, the congress aims to heighten young people's appreciation of their families, especially as seedbeds of the Christian faith and to make them aware that as members of families they also share in the call to proclaim the Good News.

There will be two divisions: Children for those seven to twelve years old and the Youth for those 13 to 18 years old. They will participate in programs designed to introduce them to Jesus and to understand more the meaning of families through pictures, songs and pantomimes.

Eucharistic Celebrations for the Families on Pilgrimage
Jan. 25, various churches in Metro Manila

This spiritual and penitential pilgrimage will be held the entire morning. The delegations will be divided according to language groups (English, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, French, German, Mandarin, Japanese, Korean and Filipino and six Philippine dialects). Delegates will have a chance to participate in the Mass in their respective languages and dialects in 16 selected parishes and shrines in Metro Manila where a Barrio Fiesta welcome program and lunch will be given the delegates. The venues are (in Makati City) St. John Bosco Parish, Santuario de San Antonio, Lorenzo Mission Institute, St. Andrew the Apostle Parish; (Mandaluyong City) San Felipe Neri Parish' (Manila) Holy Family Parish, Santo Niño Parish, St. Anthony de Padua Parish, Our Lady of Remedies Parish, Minor Basilica of San Sebastian, San Fernando de Dilao Parish, Santuario de Santo Cristo (San Juan); (Quezon City) Archdiocesan Shrine of St. Joseph and Out Lady of Mt. Carmel Shrine and (Parañaque) Mary Help of Christians National Shrine and Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal Shrine.

Festive Meeting with Testimonies from Families
6 p.m. Jan. 25, Rizal Park, Luneta, Roxas Boulevard

This event allows family-participants from five continents to engage in intense spiritual encounter. Through testimonies the families will express their aspirations for their families, arising from their daily experiences of joy, hope, anguish and grief. They will listen to what their Church expects from them amid the realities that threaten its foundation. Family representatives from each continent will also be consecrated to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Closing Mass
6 a.m. Jan. 26, Quirino Grandstand, Rizal Park, Luneta

The Papal Legate to the 4th World Meeting of Families celebrates the Eucharist for all the delegates and Catholics from all over the Philippines. There will be a blessing of families and a manifestation of the Church's commitment to the family and the families' commitment to open their doors to Christ and to build the civilization of love and life by bringing the good news to their own countries, to Asia and to the world.

Tempra supports 'Give A Life' with P.5M worth of medicines

TEMPRA, the country's leading kid's paracetamol brand, recently supplied medicines worth half a million pesos to Give A Life, a program set by the Philippine General Hospital (PGH) to provide life saving medicines and equipment to the children of the poorest families in the Philippines. This donation is the fist of a series of events for the year under the project, Tempra Supports a Child Friendly World. This campaign was launched in celebration of Tempra's 30 years of caring for the Filipino family.

Tempra will also provide additional assistance to Give A Life through its fund-raising drive, "Pisong Biyaya Alay sa Bata Mula sa Tempra". Through this fund drive, one peso for every bottle sold of specially marked Tempra drops or syrup will be donated to support the activities of child-friendly institutions, such as Give A Life.

One of the cornerstone projects of the Tempra Supports a Child Friendly World campaign is a major sponsorship of the 4th World Meeting of Families to be held in Manila starting today up to Jan. 26. Tempra embraces the goals of this event which includes promoting the importance of family to a child, an essential part of a child's growth.

"For the past 30 years, Tempra has been actively supporting the Filipino family. Continuing with our efforts, we have launched this fund-raising drive that targets child-friendly institutions, such as the Give A Life program of the PGH. We hope that through our concerted efforts, we will be able to help sick, needy children and provide them hope for a healthier life", sums up Bernard Dragon, president and general manager of the medicines group, Bristol-Myer's Squibb Phil. Inc.

For the event, Dragon visited the sick children of PGH together with Erwin Galvez, group product manager and Judy Florendo, product manager. On hand to meet them was Dr. Juan Pablo R. Nanagas, PGH director and Dr. Philip Cruz, MD prime mover of the Give A Life program.

> One of the cornerstone projects of the Tempra Supports a Child Friendly World campaign is a major sponsorship of the 4th World Meeting of Families

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BERNARD Dragon, president and general manager of the Medicines Group, Bristol-Myers Squibb recently awarded medicines to Dr. Juan Ma. Pablo R. Nanagas, director of PGH and Dr. Philip Cruz, MD, prime mover of Give A Life program. This donation is first of a series of projects under Tempra Supports a Child Friendly World campaign. This is in celebration of Tempra's 30 years of caring for the Filipino family. Also present were Erwin Valdez, group product manager and Judy Florendo, product manager.

Bilang pakikiisa sa
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Sa pagdiriwang ng 4th World Meeting of Families, maghahatid ng ginhawa ang Tempra sa mga batang nangangailangan. Sa bawat bili mo ng specially-marked Tempra Orange, magbibigay ang Tempra ng pisong donasyon sa "Give a Life" foundation. Ang alay na ito ay makapagbibigay ng panibagong pag-asa sa ating kabataan. Sa Tempra, ginhawa ng 'yong anak, ginhawa rin ng iba.

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4th World Meeting of Families

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"Share Your Light" is an easy and convenient way to contribute directly to the event's activities. All you need to do is **key in CANDLE and send to 700.**

Let us share our blessings by sharing a light for a truly worthy cause. Light a virtual candle today.

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THE 4th WORLD MEETING OF FAMILIES

Manila, Philippines
January 23-26, 2003

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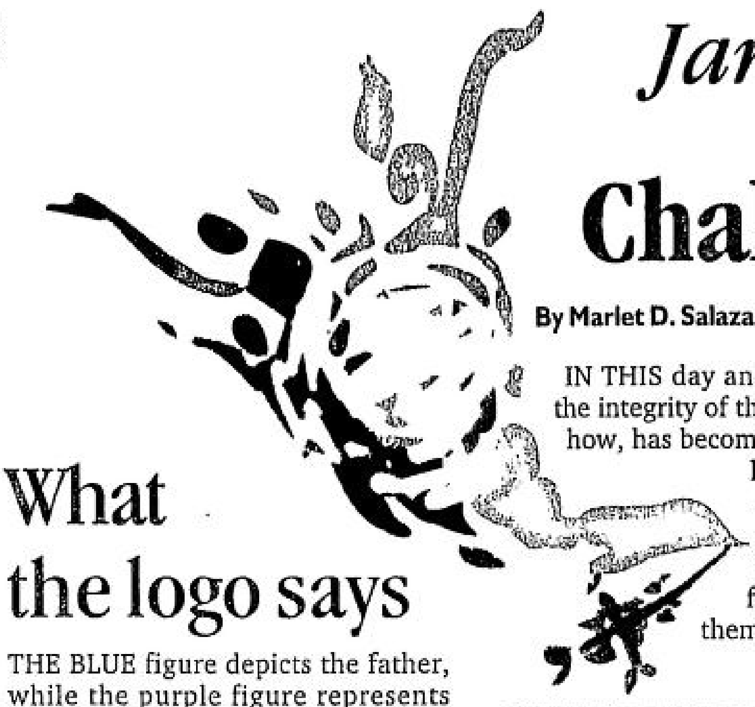
4th WORLD MEETING OF FAMILIES

January 22 to 26 2003



Challenges of modern day parenting

By Marlet D. Salazar

IN THIS day and age when people are overcome by distractions, the integrity of the family is put on the line. Keeping a family, somehow, has become a challenge. But there are people who never lose hope in making parenting a national concern, and so far, this is slowly being achieved.

For celebrity couple Anthony Pangilinan and Maricel Laxa, effective parenting must take the front seat, in spite of the many things that occupy them. Their efforts are not limited to their own family; they want to involve a larger scope of the community as well.

"God has placed us here for a special purpose," Maricel said.

Anthony and Maricel both lead a busy career and are involved in several advocacies. And yet, they managed to join their efforts and hold the 1st Philippine Parenting Convention last year. It was considered the first ever gathering of advocates and served as a venue that discussed issues and opportunities in modern day parenting.

Making a connection

The couple is both glad and inspired in sharing their thoughts about their family, experiences as parents, and as advocates.

"One thing I'm really happy is, we are connected with our kids, and

CHALLENGES/E2

What the logo says

THE BLUE figure depicts the father, while the purple figure represents the mother. The three figures in varying shades of green stand for the children.

The basic Christian concept of the family is a loving, lasting, life-giving, complementary relationship and covenant between man and woman. Green is the traditional symbol of life, and shows the family as the source of life, the ground for procreation. Three children are illustrated to express dissent to a mandatory one child-policy for families. (cf. Humane Vitae)

A white sun is at the center. This points to the Christian families as light to the people of the world. They shine brightly as witnesses of the culture of life, so that indeed they are good news for the third millenium. (cf. Evangelium Vitae)

The yellow streaks symbolize the lively and dynamic faith of the family that never fails "to set the earth on fire" so that those who come into contact with it will themselves inflame others. (Luke 12:49)

The abstract figure of the family is hence being "blown" to where the spirit wills, in order to spread the peace that is Jesus who is the way, the truth and the life. (John 14:6)

The logo's dove is painted in fiery red-orange to connote energy, ardor and zeal in proclaiming that "humanity passes by way of the family." (Familiaris Consortio)

Stars in 4th WMF

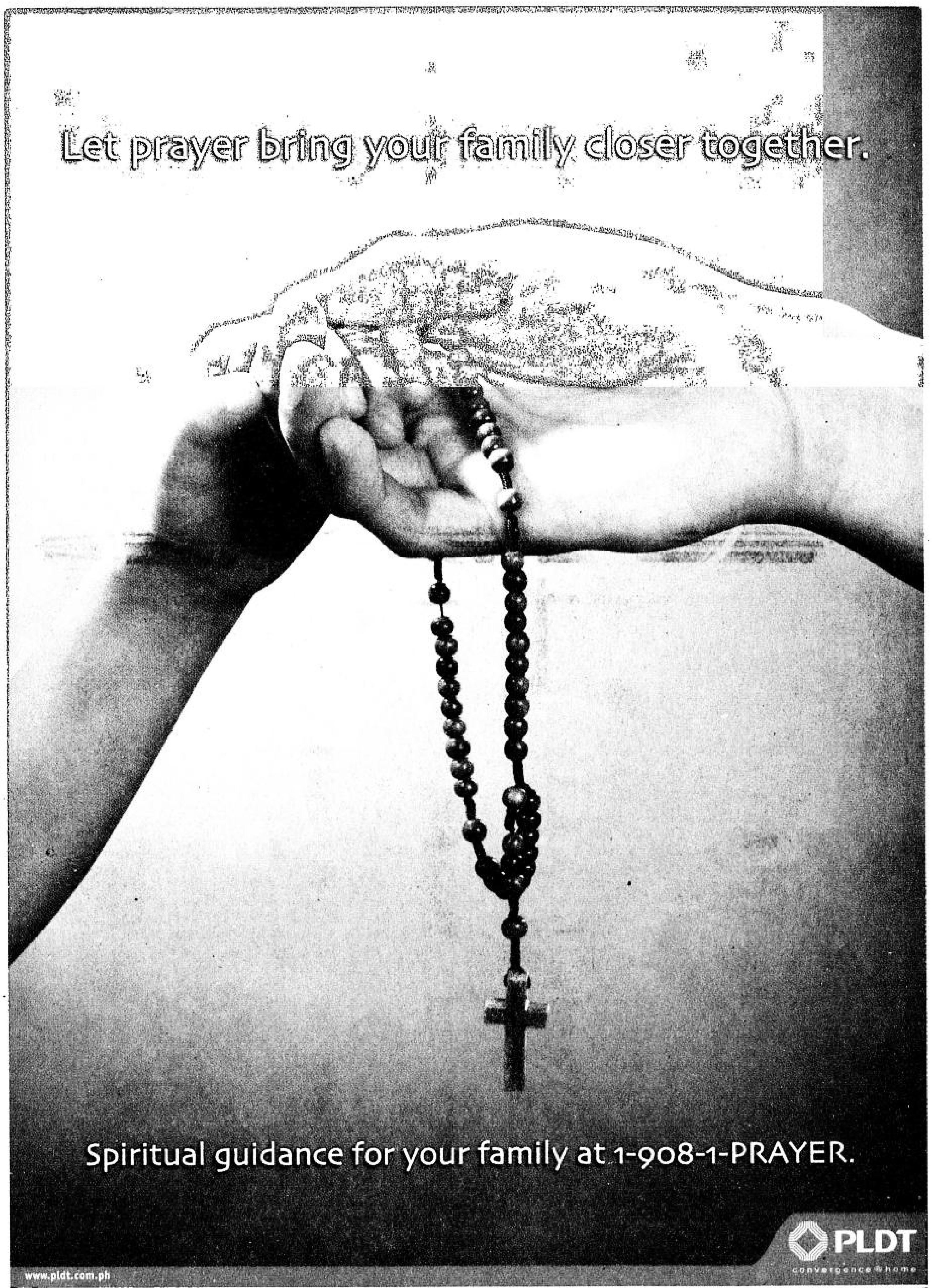
SOME of the country's leading music personalities will be participating in the Fourth World Meeting of Families from Jan. 22 to 26. Singers Jaimie Rivera, Martin Nievera, Celeste Legaspi, Jose Mari Chan, actress Jolina Magdangal and many more will be performing special numbers before the 6,000 foreign and local delegates at all major events of the Meeting both at the PICC and the Luneta.

Jaimie Rivera, Celeste Legaspi and Martin Nievera, in particular, will be singing the Meeting's official song, "Only Selfless Love" at the opening and closing ceremonies in the International Theological-Pastoral Congress (ITPC), one of the main events of the international Meeting. The three artists have their own recordings of the song composed by Fr. Carlo Magno.

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo will also address the ITPC on the opening day on Jan. 22. She is also expected to attend the Closing Mass at the Quirino Grandstand at the Luneta on Jan. 26. Former presidents Corazon Aquino and Fidel Ramos have also been invited to the Meeting.

Majority of the celebrities will be performing at the public event, the Festive Meeting with Testimonies from Families, at the Luneta from 5 to 8 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 25. It is at this event where Pope John Paul II will be seen viewing the proceedings and giving his message and his blessing to all the families of the world via a live satellite link-up with the Vatican. This event will be televised live by GMA 7.

The Fourth World Meeting of Families is the first such event to be held in Asia. Representing the Pope to this event will be Cardinal Alfonso Lopez-Trujillo, head of the Vatican Pontifical Council for the Family, which is the main organizer of this meeting. Around 1000 cardinals, bishops and priests from the world are participating in this five-day Meeting.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Challenges of modern day parenting

they are connected with us," Anthony said. "If they are hurt, happy, mad, or sad, they tell us."

Communication is an integral part in any relationship. But proper communication is better. "One thing I learned, I learned it when I was married, is that you have to express yourself. There's nothing wrong to say that you're angry or disappointed with another person as long you communicate it properly," Anthony said.

At this early, their children are learning the value of openness. As Anthony put it, anything else follows with communication. He also hopes that their kids will remain that way with them until they grow up.

What they learned growing up with their families, the couple is now bringing in to their own circle.

"We have to look at what is best, then we bring it in. In my case, it's the decision to talk together regardless," Anthony said. "You have to discover what is best in one person and support it," he added.

Maricel, on the other hand, considers herself a hands-on mother.

"I want to give my 'personal touch.' I delegate work to people but I see to it that I'm involved," she said. "In caring for our kids, I don't see working it out any other way except to first show how I would do it."

Parenting for the couple is the two of them nurturing the whole family together. Being parents is more than just telling them what to do, they learned from their kids as much as they did from their own parents.

Uniqueness

"We learn from our kids the unique nature of people," Anthony said.

After finding out what's unique or special to each kid comes the move to support it. However, parents have to be sure that what they are supporting are what the children wanted and not what they (the parents) really want. "Because otherwise, it might be the parents' agenda that will be pursued," he added.

Parents only want the best for their children, but sometimes they want their kids to be the best in a certain area that for them it's important but in reality, it's not really the kids' specialization.

Anthony and Maricel also give their children the freedom to choose even in small things like food or dress. "If we choose for them they'll grow up that way," Anthony said.

"There are things that seem like a small things to us but for them it's important," Maricel said. "So we have to see it as equally important as the way they see it."

Doing nothing time

As public figures, people see them as extraordinary people living an extraordinary life. Anthony is the president and chief trainer of BusinessWorks Inc., a management and consultancy company that conducts training programs in companies; he also anchors a TV newscast. Maricel is a prominent TV and movie personality. Checking their schedules might bring people to think if there's any time left for the family.

It's early morning; their eldest is taking an entrance exam. Anthony and Maricel rushed to the school after the interview to make sure that they're there when their daughter comes out.

Quality time for their family is not the typical one, people would think it is. "Quality time for us is doing nothing time." Anthony explains that just hanging around with the children gives them the confidence they need.

How do they make up for lost time with the kids? "First, I acknowledge it. Then I explain," Anthony said. He also lets them know that not being with them doesn't mean they're at work. He wants them to understand that he and Maricel also find time to be with friends, attend to advocacies, and other important things other than work.

"We try to prioritize," Maricel said. "We have more or less set a direction on what we want to pursue in our lives." There are instances when they have to prioritize other things over their kids. But so far, Maricel had turned down several projects so "I can be with them."

Parenting Convention

The Philippine Parenting Convention (PPC) is not just any other event; it is actually an advocacy. Which means their goals doesn't end with one convention only. PPC is an ongoing thing that aims to elevate parenting as a national media concern and change the way convention management in the country by incorporating new ways.

Parenting or family life used to be discussed only in churches, schools, but now it is also being discussed in media and other institutions. There's a need to find out why parenting is not as influential as it used to be, Anthony said. "Why the kids are being withdrawn by other institutions like media more than their parents?"

Anthony feels that they accomplished their goals for the PPC as they are now looking at holding the second one next year. The couple hopes to hold the convention every other year. Incidentally, there will be a three-hour TV special of the "First Philippine Parenting Convention" on RPN 9 on Feb. 8 from 9-11 p.m.

As prominent media personalities, Maricel believes that they could influence a lot of people in a positive way.

ANTHONY and Maricel Pangilinan

"We want to encourage families to connect. Be together," she said.

Anthony sees that families now are challenged by so many things. These things are breaking connections within members of the family. "There are initiatives outside of the family that will reward its members more than they are rewarded in the family," he said. In a way, loyalties are spread out. "There's so much outside of the family that is stealing more hope, fear and providing more venues of self-expression."

These venues are what the PPC utilized to grab the attention of parents: media, technology, food, music, etc. The idea is to incorporate these things to helping parents get the attention of their kids and how to better communicate.

Hopes

Anthony hopes that his kids will consider him their best friend. "*Sana*. I'm working on it," he said. "A friend is somebody who brings out the best in them, inspires and spends time with them. It's also what I hope Maricel and I can be to each other."

Maricel in some ways wants to be what her mom was and is still to her, "I like my kids to say that I was there for them. I want to be remembered as a woman who inspired the people in her home to have a taste of heaven. It's something I'm working on," she said.

Anthony also shared a story of a son who was dying when his father asked him, "Are you scared to meet God?" And the son replied, "Not if he's like you."

Holy Father keeps close watch on WMF

POPE John Paul II may not be coming to Manila for the Fourth World Meeting of Families on Jan. 22-26 but he is keeping close watch on the preparations unfolding. Sources say that the Pope holds regular meetings with Cardinal Alfonso Lopez Trujillo, head of the Pontifical Council for the Family and the main organizer of the event, regarding the programs and schedules of all the major events of the Meeting. The Pope also put in a last minute change to the program of the International Theological-Pastoral Congress (ITPC), one of the main events of the Meeting, when he asked the archbishop of Poland to participate as a speaker in the 3-day Congress at the PICC.

The Holy Father also insisted on watching the entire proceedings of the Festive Meeting with Testimonies from Families, another major event, at the Luneta on Saturday, Jan. 25 from 5 to 8 p.m. via a live satellite hookup between Manila and the Vatican. The original plan had the Pope appearing only shortly before the end of the event to give his message and his blessing but the program was adjusted to suit the Pope's request to be "present from beginning to end.

The World Meeting of Families was created by the Pope himself in 1985 with the aim to mobilize all Christian families to be the new evangelizers and to transform society for the better. Ever since he was a young priest in Poland, the Pope had two special ministries, the family and the youth. That is why he also created the World Youth Day.

This is the first time the Meeting will be held in Asia and Manila was the Pope's personal choice as venue for the fourth meeting. He was moved by the 1995 World Youth Day in Manila when millions of Filipinos went to the streets to welcome him and attended all the public events he was in. According to Amb. Henrietta de Villa, executive secretary of the IVWMF Central Committee, the Pope would have wanted to come to Manila again as he kept on telling her when she was still the country's ambassador to the Vatican. "He would always say, 'So many people. So many people,' when he talked about the World Youth Day in the Philippines," de Villa recalled. Health reasons, however, prevent the Pope from coming to the country for the third time.

Delegates from 80 countries and five continents have already started arriving for the five-day Meeting. Some 6,000 delegates are expected to participate. The events open to the public will be at the Luneta on the afternoon of Jan. 25 (Festive Meeting with Testimonies from Families) and at 7 a.m. of Jan. 26 (Closing Mass). The Pope is sending Cardinal Lopez Trujillo as his Legate to the event. The Luneta events where the Pope will be seen, will be shown live over GMA 7.

Delegates all set

DELEGATES to the Fourth World Meeting of Families will have many surprises. The bright-colored souvenir bags they will be given will contain many goodies, distinct with Asian / Filipino giveaways. A small box of Chinese mooncake (tikoy), a pack of Pochee candies, a mini WMF organizer, a small pamphlet of love and marriage and many Filipino examples of those topics, a notepad, pencils and ballpens and caps are just a few of the things they will be finding when they open their bags aside of course from the schedules and Congress papers.

IVWMFC Central Coordinating Committee executive secretary Amb. Henrietta de Villa said that so many kind souls have offered to donate all these goodies and things gratis con amore in order to make the delegates feel more welcome when they attend this Meeting in Manila.

Delegations from 80 countries are coming to the Meeting despite the no-show of Pope John Paul II and amid advisories of some foreign governments discouraging travel to the Philippines. From Asia (not counting the Philippines), the largest delegations will be coming from Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei and Vietnam. From the Americas, the United States and Mexico top the list. From Oceania, Australia; from Europe, Italy and Poland; and from Africa, Gabon and Nigeria. A total of 6,000 delegates are expected to flock PICC for the International Theological-Pastoral Congress and the Sons and Daughters Congresson Jan. 22 to 24 and to the Luneta for the Festive events on Jan. 25 and 26 which will be opened to the public.

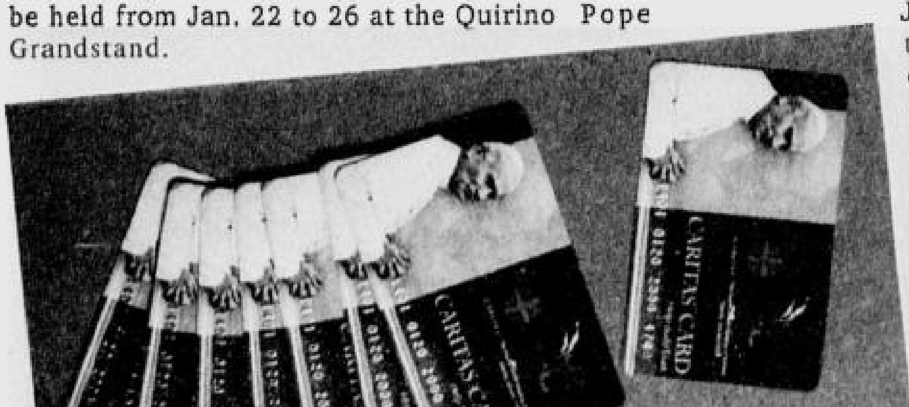
A number of delegates have already arrived in the country and are presently doing some sightseeing before buckling down to work when the meeting starts.

To date, nine cardinals, 193 archbishops and bishops and 320 priests from around the world have also signed up for the Meeting. Two cardinals who will be attending and speaking at the Congress are from the Vatican, namely, Cardinal Francis Arinze (often touted as a papabile or possible future Pope by Vatican watchers) and Cardinal Crescencio Sepe. The Pope is also sending Cardinal Alfonso Lopez Trujillo, head of the Vatican's Pontifical Council for the Family, which is the main organizer of the World Meeting of Families, as his Legate.

The Fourth World Meeting of Families will be held from Jan. 22 to 26. It is the first time such a meeting will be held in Asia since its creation by Pope John Paul II in 1985.

Caritas Card Program signifies GiveAsia's support

FUND management company GiveAsia Inc. recently gave its support to the 4th World Meeting of Families to ensure the successful holding of the celebration, which will be held from Jan. 22 to 26 at the Quirino Grandstand.



The support came through the Caritas Card Program, a unique and creative donation-discount card program recently launched by GiveAsia Inc. and its technology partner Easy Systems Inc. The card, which is also a commemorative card designed with Pope John Paul II on the cover, gives cardholders the opportunity to make a direct donation to the 4th World Meeting of Families for every purchase. The cardholder also makes a direct contribution to different Caritas Manila projects by signing up as a member and by purchasing at affiliated establishments using the card.

"The opportunity to contribute to the successful holding of this important meeting is a blessing. It is our company's privilege to be part of such a big event that is significant to the life of every Filipino family," said GiveAsia Inc. president and CEO Peter Perfecto.

The World Meeting of Families is the fruit of the direction set forth by the Apostolic Familiaris Consortio on the role of the Christian family in the modern world. For the first time in the 12 years that the Meeting has been called by the Holy Father Pope John Paul II, it will be held in Asia, particularly the Philippines, the only Catholic country in the Asian region. The Fourth World Meeting follows the first in Rome (1994) during the Year of the Family, the second in Rio de Janeiro (1997), and the third in Rome (October 2000) in the framework of the Jubilee of Families.

The theme of the World Meeting of Families is "The Christian Family: Good News for the Third Millennium." This year's celebration will bear the distinctive Filipino and Asian touch—the mark of hospitality, of enthusiasm in the form of dances and songs, and of eagerness as would be shown in the great number of local and foreign participants that are expected to congregate in Manila late this month.

The scheduled events are International Theological and Pastoral Congress and Sons and Daughters Meet from Jan. 22 to 24, Eucharistic Celebration of Families on Pilgrimage and Festive Meeting of Families with Testimonies on Jan. 25, and a Concluding Mass on Jan. 26.

GiveAsia is a fund-raising service provider that aims to develop and maintain a committed consumer giving program for non-profit organizations and their causes. Then company will soon offer hassle-free, auto-debit giving schemes for potential long-term organizations and individuals who wish to make regular donations to NPOs.

4th World Meeting of Families Episcopal Conferences Update of participation as of January 16

Africa

1. *Angola
2. Benin
3. Burkina Faso
4. *Central Africa
5. Congo
6. Egypt
7. *Ethiopia
8. Gabon
9. Ghana
10. Ivory Coast
11. Kenya
12. Libya
13. *Madagascar
14. Nigeria
15. South Africa
16. *Tanzania
17. Tunisia
18. Zimbabwe

America

19. Argentina
20. Bolivia
21. Brazil
22. Canada
23. Chile
24. Colombia
25. Cuba
26. Ecuador
27. Haiti
28. Honduras
29. Mexico
30. Nicaragua
31. Panama
32. Paraguay
33. Peru
34. Puerto Rico
35. Saipan
36. United States of America

Asia

37. Bangladesh
38. Cambodia
39. India
40. *Indonesia
41. Iran
42. Iraq
43. Israel
44. Japan
45. Korea
46. Lebanon
47. Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei
48. Myanmar
49. *Pakistan
50. *Sri Lanka
51. Syria
52. Taiwan (Chinese Regional)
53. Thailand
54. Vietnam

Europe

55. *Albania
56. *Bielorussia
57. Bulgaria
58. Czech Republic
59. England and Wales
60. France
61. Germany
62. *Hungary
63. Ireland
64. Italy
65. *Lithuania
66. *Poland
67. *Romania
68. *Russia
69. Norway
70. *Slovakia
71. Spain
72. Switzerland
73. *Ukraine
74. Yugoslavia

Oceania

75. Australia
76. Fiji-CEPAC
77. New Zealand
78. Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands

Renowned speakers in ITPC

SIXTY Seven internationally renowned theologians, lay leaders of family movements and Vatican officials will be speakers at the International Theological-Pastoral Congress (ITPC), one of the major events of the Fourth World Meeting of Families. The ITPC will be held from Jan. 22 to 24 at the PICC.

Among the speakers will be Mr Kiko Arguello, founder of the Neo Catechumenate movements; Ms Katherine Hoomkwap, wife of a senator from Nigeria; Ms Bianchi de Soto, member of Argentina's Madres de Mayo Uno; Cardinal Francis Arinze, prefect of the Vatican's Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of Sacraments; Cardinal Cresencio Sepe, prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples; Archbishop Paul Cordes, head of the Vatican's charity arm, Cor Unum; and the Pope's Legate to the Meeting, Cardinal Alfonso Lopez Trujillo, head of the Vatican's Pontifical Council for the Family which is the main organizer of the World Meeting of Families.

The ITPC will also have President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo as guest speaker on its opening day and Supreme Court Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. Other Filipino speakers are Bishop Teodoro Bacani Jr. and Bishop Luis Antonio Tagle. Manila Archbishop, Cardinal Jaime Sin who is also the chair of the IVWMF's National Organizing Committee, will also give the welcome remarks.

For the Sons and Daughters Congress, the parallel congress to the ITPC for the children of the ITPC delegates also at the PICC, Archbishop Czaba Ternyak of the Vatican, will address the pre-teens age group.

For the Festive Meeting with Testimonies from Families, one of the public events of the Meeting from 5 to 8 p.m. of Jan. 25 at the Quirino Grandstand, Luneta, families from Papua New Guinea, Lithuania, Mexico, Gabon and Italy along with an urban poor family from the Philippines will give their personal testimonies. It will be during this event that the Pope will be shown viewing the proceedings via a live satellite hook-up with the Vatican. The Holy Father will also deliver his message and give his blessings to the families of the world.

The Fourth World Meeting of Families will be held from Jan. 22 to 26. Delegates from 80 countries will be participating in this gathering, the first time such an event is being held in Asia.

THE 4th WORLD MEETING OF FAMILIES

We Call All Families...

Join the activities of the 4th World Meeting of Families.

Saturday, 25 January 2003

8:00 am - 12:00 noon

Morning Masses and Fiesta Celebrations

- Shrine of Mary Help of Christians (Parañaque)
  - with delegates from Africa
- San Felipe Neri Parish (Mandaluyong)
  - with delegates from Asia
- Lorenzo Mission Institute,
  San Carlos Seminary (Makati)
  - with Chinese-speaking delegates
- Shrine of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal (Parañaque)
  - with English-speaking delegates
- Our Lady of the Remedies Parish (Malate, Manila)
  - with delegates from Europe
- St. John Bosco Parish (Makati)
  - with delegates from Italy
- Santuario de San Antonio (Makati)
  - with delegates from Latin America and Spain
- St. Andrew the Apostle Parish (Bel-Air, Makati)
  - with delegates from France
- Holy Family Parish (San Andres, Manila)
  - with local delegates
- Shrine of St. Joseph (Quezon City)
  - with local delegates
- St. Anthony Parish (Singalong, Manila)
  - with local delegates
- Shrine of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel
  (New Manila, Quezon City)
  - with local delegates
- San Fernando de Dilao Parish (Paco, Manila)
  - with local delegates
- Santo Niño Parish (Tondo, Manila)
  - with local delegates

2:00 - 8:00 pm

Festive Meeting of Families - Luneta
Highlighted by the Testimonies of Families and
The Message and Blessing of Pope John Paul II
Live from the Vatican.

8:00 pm - 12:00 mn

Festive Vigil of the Youth - Luneta

Sunday, 26 January 2003

12:00 - 5:00 am

El Shaddai Assembly - Luneta

7:00 am

Final Mass - Luneta
Main Celebrant:
His Eminence Alfonso Cardinal Lopez Trujillo,
President of the Pontifical Council for the Family
And Papal Legate for the
4th World Meeting of Families,
Joined by 1000 Cardinals, Bishops and Priests
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Aries Espinosa, Editor

Philips supports young Filipino designers

PHILIPS Consumer Electronics showed its support of local talents in the field of fashion with its sponsorship of the 2002 Fashionista Philippine Fashion and Design Competition.

A joint project of the Fashion Design Council of the Philippines (FDCP) and the Garments and Textile and Export Board, in partnership with MTV Fashionista, this yearly competition puts focus on creations of the country's most promising young designers. Since its inception in 1998, the competition has been discovering the best local talents and sending them to Paris, France to represent the Philippines in the prestigious *Concours International des Jeunes Creatures de Mode* fashion design competition.

This year, twenty-two young designers presented their creations to an audience comprised of the leading names in the fashion and garments industry, as well as fashionistas and politicians. The stage set-up was minimalist and the lighting no-nonsense, to further highlight the striking designs as worn by top models onstage. The seemingly stark emptiness of the stage was punctuated by the use of Philips Real Flat TVs to line the carpeted walkway. The TVs not only served as video monitors to provide the audience with a closer view of each entry, but also as art installations to provide a contemporary feel to the event.

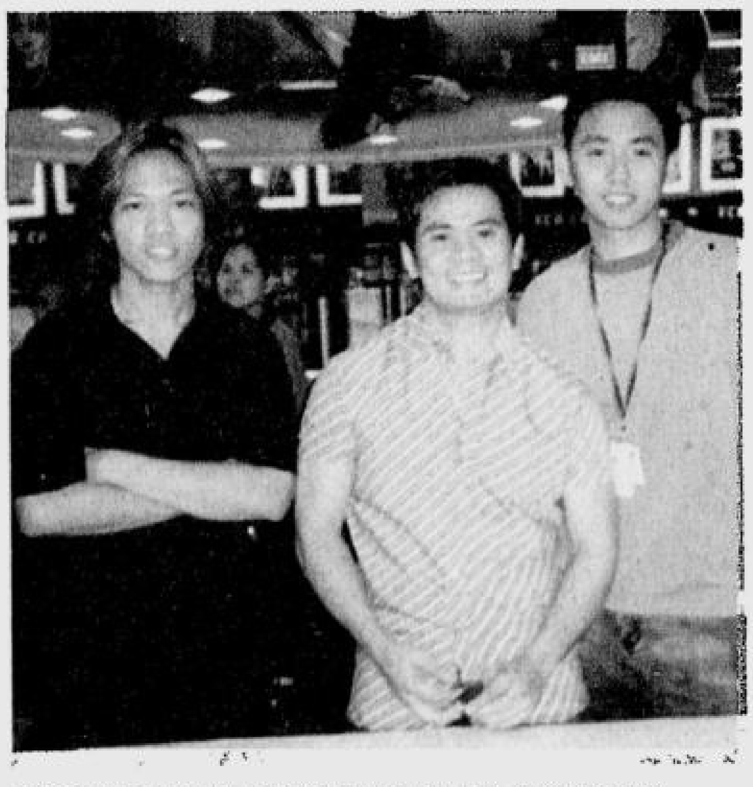
Emerging as finalists were young fashion designers Eerie Angeles, Avel Bacudio, Popoy Barba, Pablo Mendez III, and James Reyes. Alex Pigao bagged the top honors, and will be heading to Paris for this year's *Concours International des Jeunes Creatures de Mode* competition.

With the support of the industry leaders such as Philips, the Fashionista Philippine Fashion and Design Competition gives young designers a chance to showcase their talent. And judging from the astounding creations at this year's event, they can surely keep their place among the world's best.

SEACHAMP MAKES BREAKTHROUGH
Seachamp International's Polar products were recently launched in major supermarkets in Dubai and Abu Dhabi. The Polar line of frozen ready-to-cook seafood dishes is the first Filipino brand accepted in mainstream supermarkets in the United Arab Emirates, such as the Carrefour chain. Polar's penetration of the mainstream international food retail market is an important milestone for the Philippine manufacturing industry. It proves that a Filipino food product of good quality and in the proper packaging can be accepted as a global brand. In fact, prior to this breakthrough, Philippine-made food products were usually confined to the ethnic sections of supermarkets abroad. Shown in photo at Carrefour's main outlet in City Center Dubai are: Seachamp International president Reynaldo Sy (center), flanked by (from left): Carrefour merchandise manager for fresh food Louis Carbonaro; Philippine Center for International Trade Exposition and Missions (Citem) executive director Felicidad V. Tan-Co; Carrefour fresh food assistant merchandise manager Tahir Hussain; and Philippine Trade Commissioner to the UAE Gil Herico.

SPC SISTER RECEIVES AWARD
For her pro-active and dynamic leadership in spearheading the KKK (Kilos Kontra Krimen), Sr. Hilaria Suzette Bautista of Saint Paul College received the Educator's Award from Her Excellency President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, during the 102nd Anniversary of the Western Police District on Jan. 10, at the Philam-Life Auditorium, UN Avenue. Looking on is Manila Mayor Lito Atienza.

GA TOWERS GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY
Delfin Lee (extreme right), president of Globe Asiatique, leads the groundbreaking ceremony of G.A. Towers, the first high-rise condominium project of Globe Asiatique funded by Pag-IBIG Fund under its MRB Program. G.A. Towers, strategically located along Edsa in Mandaluyong, shall make condominium living within easy reach of middle-income earners through its easy financing scheme. With Lee are Pag-IBIG and HUDCC officers.



OGIE SIGNS AUTOGRAPHS AT ODYSSEY
Ogie Alcasid recently treated his fans to a treat when he went to Odyssey in Megamall to sign autographs for his hordes of fans. Shown from left are: Richard Francisco (marketing), Ogie Alcasid and Sam Duque (store supervisor). Ogie's album is currently available at all Odyssey outlets.

Free Beetle model cars from Citibank Paylite

IN LINE with Citibank's Paylite Beetlemania promotion, Citibank gave away Beetle model cars to its cardholders. Cardholders simply had to shop with their Citibank credit card and charge a minimum amount of P5,000 to PayLite Installment Plan, and presented their charge slip to the PayLite Beetlemania booths, to redeem the free model cars.

A Beetle replica – perfect for aficionados who can't have enough of this radically designed car. A true collector's item, this pull-back-powered Beetle model car from Kinsmart is made of die cast metal, measures 1/32 and 4 ¾" long and features distinct Volkswagen logos. The doors of this model car also open. It comes in black, blue metallic, yellow, silver metallic, red and lime metallic colors.

The PayLite Installment Plan is a unique privilege available to all cardholders of Citibank Silver Visa and MasterCard, Citibank Gold Visa and MasterCard, Shell-Citibank MasterCard, Citibank-Cathay Pacific Visa, Citibank Clear MasterCard and Citibank Platinum Visa. For Further details, call the 24-hour CitiPhone at 995-9999 in Metro Manila, 234-9999 in Metro Cebu or log on to www.citibank.com.ph

Product FILES

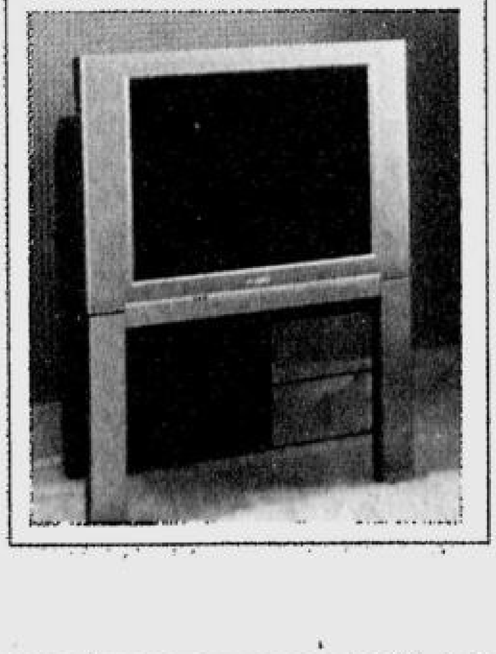
Philips goes digital with new TV

PHILIPS introduces the new Matchline 34PT8420 television, a hi-tech TV that can let you enjoy the benefits of digital broadcast. The new Philips Matchline 34PT8420 is HDTV-ready, which guarantees the highest elements in digital picture resolution, to make this TV future-proof when digital broadcasts finally reach wide-market status.

Complementing this feature is the Progressive scan technology, which provides sharper pictures, with no blurred visuals or flicker. Picture resolution is further enhanced with the Crystal Clear feature, which includes the Dynamic Contrast and Digital Comb Filter functions to eliminate cross-luminance and distortion.

Enjoy two great programs at the same time, as the Matchline 34PT8420's Full Double Screen allows for viewing of two channels simultaneously. And complementing the awesome picture is the great sound, courtesy of the Matchline 34PT8420's Virtual Dolby Surround.

The new Philips Matchline 34PT8420 will surely provide you with the best and the brightest pictures today and in the years to come.



Sony advanced technology at Photoworld 2003

SONY Philippines Inc., the country's market leader in consumer electronics, will showcase products boasting its advanced digital technologies at Photoworld Manila 2003, an annual exhibit on developments and trends in photography organized by the federation of Philippine Photographers Foundation Inc. to which started Jan. 17 and ends Jan. 22 at the Glorietta Activity Center Makati City.

Open to the public, Photoworld 2003 will display the newest photo equipment and feature photo exhibits, seminars, competitions and promos.

Sony Philippines will exhibit the complete lineup of its latest digital video cameras and digital still cameras at Photoworld 2003. The company recently launched for the young and tech-conscious consumers the Sony Cyber-shot U, a digital wonder featuring revolutionary technology with its ultra-small and hip camera design, and multi-tasking features.

Sony has also developed the world's smallest and lightest camcorders, the DCR-IP5, DCR-IP45 and the DCR-IP210 using the MICROMV format developed by the company, with MPEG2 data compression used in digital satellite broadcasting and DVD video. Easy editing on your PC in now possible with its USB Streaming features. Simply hook your Handycam to your PC and with editing software like Pixela, you're all set to edit moving pictures. Together with video conference software, USB Streaming also lets you do video conferencing through your Handycam.

With Photokina Marketing as its new photo channel partner, Sony Philippines serves the imaging needs of Filipino consumers with superior technology and value, whether for information, entertainment or communication.

CITIBANK GIVES AWAY FIRST BEETLE IN PROMO
Fifty-five-year-old Chang Hoon Son, general manager of Sang Woo Philippines, is the lucky winner of a brand new Volkswagen Beetle in the first draw of Citibank's PayLite Beetlemania promotion held last Nov. 15. Three more Volkswagen Beetles will be given away to Citibank cardholders. Promotion will run until Feb. 15 so you can still join and get the chance to win a Beetle. Every P3,000 charged to PayLite in a single transaction will earn one raffle entry. You can also get raffle entries by converting bills of at least P3,000 to PayLite, applying for supplementary cards or enrolling utility bills to your Citibank cards. For more details on the PayLite Beetlemania promotion, call the 24-hour Citiphone at 995-9999 in Metro Manila, 234-9999 in Metro Cebu, 1-800-10-995-9999 in other provinces or log on to www.citibank.com.ph. Photo shows Citibank cards marketing VP Bea Teh-Tan with Chang Hoon Son, first to win one of the four new Volkswagen Beetles being given away in Citibank's PayLite Beetlemania promotion.

We succeed through our client's success
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NEW TELEPERFORMANCE PHILIPPINES
TelePhilippines Inc. successfully re-launched itself under a new name, Teleperformance Philippines Inc., and a new logo at the Edsa Shangri-La Hotel. Teleperformance Philippines focuses in providing end-to-end call center services for customer acquisition, customer care debt collection, technical assistance and market research. Teleperformance Philippines prides itself in being a joint venture of Paris-based SR Teleperformance, a major worldwide leader in Customer Relationship Management (CRM). As part of its re-launch, Teleperformance Philippines moves to its new office at the 12th floor Octagon Centre Building, San Miguel Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City. Photo shows the Teleperformance officials during its company re-launch. From left: Ms Niza Sarmiento, vice president for operations; Mr Jose Mari Prats, general manager; Ana Bautista, vice president for sales and marketing; Leo de la Cruz, call center manager; and Armie Reyes, sales and marketing assistant.